THE·NEW·HUDSON SHAKESPEARE

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THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
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PREFACE

The text of this edition of *Hamlet* is based upon a collation of the Second Quarto (the Quarto of 1604), the seventeenth century Folios, the Globe edition, the Cambridge (W. A. Wright) edition of 1891, and the editions of Delius (1882) and of Furness. As compared with the text of the earlier editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, it is conservative. Exclusive of changes in spelling, punctuation, and stage directions, very few emendations by eighteenth century and nineteenth century editors have been adopted; and these, with every variation from the First Folio, are indicated in the textual notes. These notes are printed immediately below the text, so that a reader or student may see at a glance the evidence in the case of a disputed reading, and have some definite understanding of the reasons for those differences in the text of Shakespeare which frequently surprise and very often annoy. Such an arrangement should be of special help in the case of a play universally read and very often acted, as no two actors or interpreters agree in adhering to one text. A consideration of the more poetical, or the more dramatically effective, of two variant readings will often lead to rich results in awakening a spirit of discriminating interpretation and in developing true creative criticism. In no sense is this a textual variorum edition. The variants given are only those of importance and high authority.

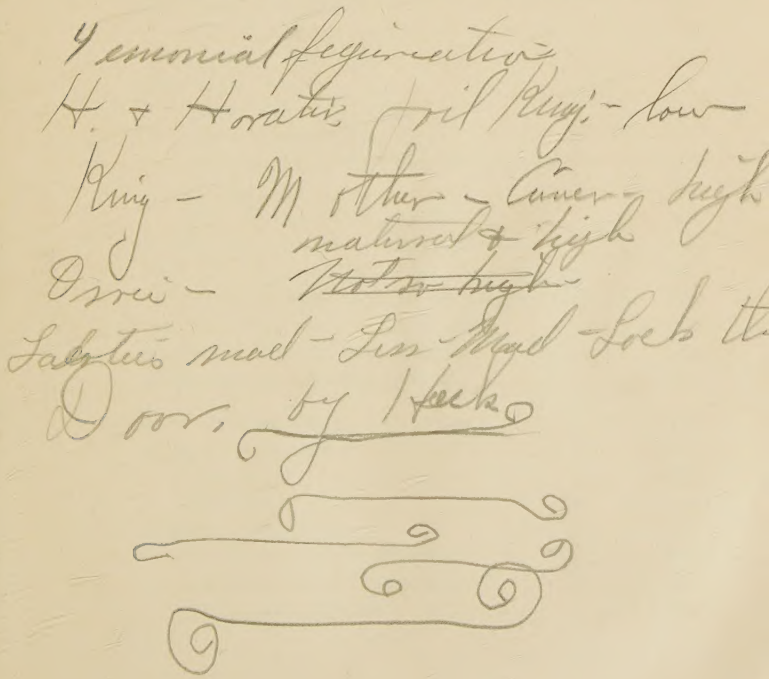
The spelling and the punctuation of the text are modern, except in the case of verb terminations in *-ed*, which, when the *e* is silent, are printed with the apostrophe in its place. This is the general usage in the First Folio. The important contractions in the First Folio which may indicate Elizabethan pronunciation ('i' th'' for 'in the,' for example) are also followed. Modern spelling has to a certain extent been adopted in the text variants; but the original spelling has been retained wherever its peculiarities have been the basis for important textual criticism and emendation.

With the exception of the position of the textual variants, the plan of this edition is similar to that of the old Hudson Shakespeare. It is impossible to specify the various instances of revision and rearrangement in the matter of the Introduction and the interpretative notes, but the endeavor has been to retain all that gave the old edition its unique place and to add the results of what seems vital and permanent in later inquiry and research.

While it is important that the principle of *suum cuique* be attended to so far as is possible in matters of research and scholarship, it is becoming more and more difficult to give every man his own in Shakespearian annotation. The amount of material accumulated is so great that the identity-origin of much important comment and suggestion is either wholly lost or so crushed out of shape as to be beyond recognition. Instructive significance perhaps attaches to this in editing the works of one who quietly made so much of materials gathered by others. But the list of authorities given on page lxxxiii will indicate the chief source of much that has gone to enrich the value of this edition. Especial acknowledgment is here made of the obligations to

Dr. William Aldis Wright and Dr. Horace Howard Furness, whose work in the collation of Quartos, Folios, and the more important English and American editions of Shakespeare has been of so great value to all subsequent editors and investigators.

With regard to the general plan of this revision of Hudson's Shakespeare, Professor W. P. Trent, of Columbia University, has offered valuable suggestions and given important advice; and to Mr. M. Grant Daniell's patience, accuracy, and judgment this volume owes both its freedom from many a blunder and its possession of a carefully arranged index.



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INTRODUCTION

NOTE. In citations from Shakespeare's plays and nondramatic poems the numbering has reference to the Globe edition, except in the case of this play, where the reference is to this edition.

I. SOURCES

The beginnings of the legend of Hamlet link a Scandinavian folk-tale, probably in its genesis a nature-myth, with Ireland; and the two most potent names in the imaginative literature of the English-speaking world, Arthur and Hamlet, unite the two great racial strains of the English people, the Celtic and the Teutonic.

THE NAME 'HAMLET'[1]

1. *The Annals of Ireland.* In *The Annals of Ireland by the Four Masters*,[2] under the year 917, is an account of the battle of Ath-Cliath, "concerning which," says the historian, "several songs were made, of which the burden of one was, 'Where is the chief of the western world?'" Then is quoted this fragment from the lament of Queen Gormflaith:

> Ill for me the compliment of the two foreigners,
> Who slew Niall and Cearbhall;
> Cearbhall was slain by Ulf, a mighty deed;
> Niall Glundubh by Amhlaide.

[1] "No one knows the origin of this name." — Vigfusson.

[2] Complete references, with philological notes, will be found in the Introduction to Gollancz's *Hamlet in Iceland* (*Ambales Saga*), from which are taken the translations given here.

"The last word, 'Amhlaide,'" says Gollancz, "is certainly the Irish form of 'Amloði' or Hamlet."

2. *Snorri's Prose Edda.* Three centuries later, in Snorri Sturlason's *The Prose Edda*, is the mysterious fragment from Snaebjörn, "Far out, off yonder ness, the Nine Maids of the Island Mill stir amain the host-cruel skerry-quern — they who in ages past ground Hamlet's meal." Here the hero of the Irish battlefield seems to be conceived as a world influence, in league with sea and with land, at the heart of storms and shipwrecks, a force that destroys, and as it destroys, shapes anew.

The Main Story

1. *Saxo's Historia Danica.* From myths, legends, and traditions, of which a glimpse may be caught in these earliest known references to Hamlet given above, Saxo Grammaticus (Saxo the 'Grammarian' or 'Scholar'), about the beginning of the thirteenth century, framed the outline of the Hamlet story as it is found in modern literature. Saxo set himself to tell in Latin the history of his country, and in the third and fourth books of his *Historia Danica* (*Gesta Danorum*)[1] is given the story of Amlethus or Hamlet. With the old matter of the North, Saxo here inweaves elements from legendary Roman history, notably from the story of Lucius Junius Brutus. In Saxo's story Horwendil,[2] father of Hamlet,

[1] *Saxonis Grammatici Danorum Historiae*, first printed in Paris, 1514. Modern editions, with scholarly apparatus, are those of Müller and Velschow, Copenhagen, 1839–1858, and of Holder, Strasburg, 1886. Nine books have been translated into English by Oliver Elton, with a valuable Introduction by York Powell.

[2] This name has been identified with the Scandinavian *Orvandill*, the German *Orendel*, the English *Earendel*, "whose myth was

is murdered by his brother Feng (Fengo, Fengon), who marries Gerutha (Grytha), Hamlet's mother. Plotting revenge, Hamlet feigns madness or 'folly.' A girl is thrown in his way that his true state of mind may be found out. During an interview with his mother, Hamlet kills an eavesdropper. His uncle sends him to England with two companions who bear a letter to the English king requesting that Hamlet be put to death. Hamlet alters the letter, and his companions are put to death. Hamlet returns, slays his uncle, makes an oration to the people,[1] and ascends the throne. In the end he is betrayed to his death by a faithless wife, the 'Amazon' Hermutrude (Hermtrude, Hermentrude).[2] Saxo closes the first part of his Hamlet story with the following words,[3] which strangely adumbrate something of the problem and the mystery of Shakespeare's play:

O valiant Amleth, and worthy of immortal fame, who being shrewdly armed with a feint of folly, covered a wisdom too high for human wit under a marvellous disguise of silliness! and not only found in his subtlety means to protect his own safety, but also by

Christianized by Germanic Europe, and whose star was glorified as 'the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'" — Gollancz.

[1] In this oration Gollancz finds a source for Brutus's speech, *Julius Cæsar*, III, ii.

[2] In Saxo's Hamlet narrative some scholars find two distinct strata of legendary lore, the hero of the third book being identified with Olaf Kyrre, the Anlaf Cwiran of the *Saxon Chronicle* and the Amlaf Cuaran of the *Irish Annals*, best known to modern readers as 'Havelok the Dane,' while the hero of the fourth book is identical with the Hygelac of *Beowulf*. See Latham's *Dissertation on Hamlet*, Zinzow's *Die Hamletsage*, Moltke's *Shakespeares Hamlet-Quellen*, and Simrock's *Die Quellen des Shakespeare*.

[3] As given in Elton's translation.

its guidance found opportunity to avenge his father. By this skilful defence of himself, and strenuous revenge for his parent, he has left it doubtful whether we are to think more of his wit or his bravery.

2. *Hans Sachs's Version.* In the fourteenth and the fifteenth century the Hamlet story became widely known in Europe, and in 1558 Hans Sachs gave a version of it in homely German verse. Sachs's work has been much ridiculed, but it certainly showed the capability of the story for popular poetic treatment, and it marks the beginning of literary interest in Hamlet on German soil. In *Shakespeare's Puck* Dr. Bell made an extraordinary plea for the English *Hamlet* having its true genesis in Hans Sachs's poem.

3. *Belleforest's Histoires Tragiques.* A free translation of Saxo's Hamlet narrative into French prose was made by Belleforest (François de Belle-Forest Comingeois) and published in 1570 in the fifth book of the *Histoires Tragiques*.[1] Here the possibilities of the story for dramatic and psychological treatment are further developed. Several editions of the *Histoires Tragiques* appeared in France before 1600, but so far as is known there was no English version until 1608, when Thomas Pavier, probably influenced by the popularity of Shakespeare's play, published the Hamlet portion of Belleforest's work under the title of *The Hystorie of Hamblet*.[2]

[1] Elsewhere in the *Histoires Tragiques* is an interesting version of the story of *Much Ado About Nothing* taken from the Italian *novelle* of Bandello.

[2] It is given in full in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library* and in Furness's Variorum *Hamlet*, Vol. II. It shows in more than one place the influence of Shakespeare. For example, as Elze pointed out, Hamlet's exclamation before he kills the eavesdropper, "A rat! a rat!" is in the English version, but there is no suggestion of it in the French original.

4. *A Lost Play.* It was probably through Belleforest's version that the story of Hamlet reached the English stage. In 1589 an English drama on the subject seems to have been in existence, for in that year there is a pointed reference to such a play in a letter addressed by Thomas Nash "to the Gentlemen Students of both Vniuersities," and prefixed to Greene's *Menaphon.* In 1594, under the date June 9, Henslowe records in his Diary, "Rd at hamlet . . . viijs.," and his entry shows that it was not a new play. Cumulative evidence points to this lost play (the *Ur-Hamlet* of German investigators) being Senecan, a tragedy of blood and revenge, with a ghost in it, a play within a play, a marked tendency to moralizing and soliloquy, and that it was probably by Thomas Kyd, the author of *The Spanish Tragedie*, a play marked by these characteristics. That Shakespeare was profoundly influenced by such a play in the structural part of *Hamlet* there can be no doubt, and modern students find the explanation of many difficulties, inconsistencies, and discrepancies, as, for example, in V, i, 154 (see note), in the inevitable clashing between the stage tradition with its framework of the old blood-and-revenge drama and the rich intellectual and emotional character of the central figure as conceived by the mature Shakespeare.

5. *Der Bestrafte Brudermord.* In 1781 was printed, from a manuscript dated 1710, a German version of *Hamlet* in prose, entitled *Der Bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Daennemark* ('Fratricide Punished, or Prince Hamlet of Denmark').[1] Investigation has established that this is an acting version probably used by English actors in Germany in

[1] An English translation is given in Furness's Variorum.

the early years of the seventeenth century.[1] The two interesting facts, (1) that Polonius is here represented by Corambus (cf. 'Corambis' in the First Quarto), and (2) that the play proper is preceded by a Senecan prologue, have led some students to conclude that this is a German version of the lost *Hamlet*. Gollancz thinks that the chief merit of "this soulless and coarse production" is that the prologue may represent a fragment of the pre-Shakespearian play. Dowden regards the German play as "a debased adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in its earliest form." Sachs's so-called doggerel verse and this "soulless" and "debased" version give little promise of the illuminating Hamlet literature that Germany was destined to give the world.

Polonius's Precepts, I, iii, 59–80

In *Shakespeare's Euphuism*, W. L. Rushton places side by side the precepts of Polonius to Laertes[2] and those of Euphues to Philautus (*Euphues and his England*, page 430, Arber's edition). Both Polonius and Euphues speak of the advice given as "these few precepts." Very similar, too, are the counsels given to Philador by his father in Greene's *Menaphon*, and the advice of Clerophontes to his son Gwydonius in Greene's *Carde of Fancie*. French, in his *Shakespeareana Genealogica*, also points out parallels to several of Polonius's precepts in Lord Burghley's "ten precepts" addressed to his son Robert Cecil when the young man was setting out on his travels. French quotes these parallels as a link in his chain of evidence that prominent men

[1] See A. Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*.

[2] Beyersdorff, *Giordano Bruno und Shakespeare*, traces these precepts and much else in *Hamlet* to Bruno.

and women of the Elizabethan age are represented in the characters of this play, Lord Burghley being identified with Polonius, and Sir Philip Sidney with Hamlet.[1]

"ÆNEAS' TALE TO DIDO," II, ii, 434; 437–505

The ultimate source for the speeches in the play, which was "caviare to the general," is the second book of the *Æneid*, but Shakespeare undoubtedly had in mind the following passages from the first scene of the second act of *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (see note, II, ii, 434):

ÆNEAS. At last came Pirrhus, fell and full of ire,
His harnesse dropping bloud, and on his speare
The mangled head of Priams yongest sonne,
And, after him, his band of Mirmidons,
With balles of wilde fire in their murdering pawes,
Which made the funerall flame that burnt faire Troy,
All which hemd me about, crying, This is he!
DIDO. Ah, how could poore Æneas scape their hands?
ÆNEAS. My mother Venus, iealous of my health,
Convaid me from their crooked nets and bands;
So I escapt the furious Pirrhus wrath:
Who then ran to the pallace of the King,
And at Ioues altar finding Priamus,
About whose witherd neck hung Hecuba,
Foulding his hand in hers, and joyntly both
Beating their breasts, and falling on the ground,
He, with his faulchions poynt raisde vp at once,

[1] Among other studies in the historical-allegorical significance of the play may be mentioned Conrad's claim (*Preussische Jahrbücher*, 1895) that Hamlet was intended for Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and Plumptre's *Observations on Hamlet* (1796), in which is a well-sustained attempt to prove that Shakespeare designed the play "as an indirect censure on Mary, Queen of Scots." See Silberschlag's *Shakespeares Hamlet, seine Quellen und politischen Beziehungen*.

And with Megaras eyes stared in their face,
Threatning a thousand deaths at euery glaunce:
To whom the aged King thus trembling spoke;
'Achilles sonne, remember what I was,
Father of fifty sonnes, but they are slaine;
Lord of my fortune, but my fortune 's turnd:
King of this citie, but my Troy is fired;
And now am neither father, Lorde, nor King:
Yet who so wretched but desires to liue?
O, let me liue, greate Neoptolemus!'
Not mou'd at all, but smiling at his teares,
This butcher, whilst his hands were yet held vp,
Treading vpon his breast, strooke off his handes.

DIDO. O, end, Æneas! I can heare no more.

ÆNEAS. At which the franticke Queene leapt on his face,
And in his eyelids hanging by the nayles
A little while prolong'd her husband's life:
At last, the souldiers puld her by the heeles,
And swong her howling in the emptie ayre
Which sent an eccho to the wounded King:
Whereat he lifted up his bedred lims
And would have grappeld with Achilles sonne,
Forgetting both his want of strength and hands;
Which he disdaining, whiskt his sword about,
And with the wind thereof the King fell downe;
Then from the nauell to the throat at once
He ript old Priam; at whose latter gaspe
Ioues marble statue gan to bend the brow,
As lothing Pirrhus for this wicked act.
Yet he, vndaunted, took his father's flag,
And dipt it in the old King's chill colde bloud,
And then in triumph ran into the streetes
Through which he could not passe for slaughtred men;
So, leaning on his sword, he stood stone still,
Viewing the fire wherewith rich Ilion burnt.

* * * * * * * *

ANNA. O, what became of aged Hecuba?

"Guilty Creatures sitting at a Play," II, ii, 576

In Plutarch's *Life of Pelopidas* it is told that Alexander, the tyrant of Pheræ, left the theatre during the performance of the *Troades* of Euripides, because he was ashamed that the citizens should see him, who never pitied any man whom he had murdered, weeping over the sufferings of Hecuba and Andromache (cf. II, ii, 544–545).[1] In the play, *A Warning for Faire Women*, acted in 1599, but probably acted much earlier, being founded upon an actual occurrence in 1573, is the following passage:

> Ile tell you, sir, one more to quite your tale.
> A woman that had made away her husband,
> And sitting to behold a tragedy
> At Linne a towne in Norffolke,
> Acted by players travelling that way,
> Wherein a woman that had murtherd hers
> Was ever haunted with her husbands ghost:
> The passion written by a feeling pen,
> And acted by a good tragedian,
> She was so mooved with the sight thereof,
> As she cryed out, the play was made by her,
> And openly confesst her husbands murder.

There is a similar passage in the first scene of the second act of Massinger's *The Roman Actor;* but in date of composition this play, in which the device of a scene within a scene[2] is repeated thrice, is at least twenty years later than Shakespeare's *Hamlet.*

[1] A. W. Ward, on the authority of Muret, *L'Histoire sur le Théâtre*, notes that a performance of *Les États de Blois*, at St. Cloud, unpleasantly reminded Napoleon of the murder of the Duc d'Enghien.

[2] "A curious parallel . . . is mentioned by Ste. Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ed. 1867, vol. I, pp. 147 *seqq.*" — Ward.

Hamlet's Soliloquy, III, i, 56–88

For lines and expressions in Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be, or not to be . . ." many interesting source-hints or parallels have been suggested. To Montaigne has been traced "a consummation Devoutly to be wish'd,"[1] lines 63–64; to Catullus and to Seneca, "No traveller returns," line 80; and to Cardanus's *Comforte*, 1576, "To die, — to sleep, — To sleep! perchance to dream!" lines 64–65. Of all these parallels, or sources, perhaps the most remarkable is that which connects "The undiscover'd country," line 79, with a passage in Marlowe's *Edward the Second*. As young Mortimer goes to his doom, he takes leave of Queen Isabella in these words:

> Farewell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer,
> That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,
> Goes to discover countries yet unknown. [V. vi. 64–66.]

Names of Persons and Places

If the sources of the main story of *Hamlet* are Teutonic, Celtic, and Latin, the names of the dramatis personæ are from origins equally varied and cosmopolitan. 'Gertrude' is undoubtedly Saxo's 'Gerutha.' 'Ophelia,'[2] in the form 'Ofelia,' is the name of a shepherd in Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, the work which so profoundly influenced the development of pastoral literature in the sixteenth century. In

[1] The same idea occurs in Plato's *Apology*.

[2] "Ophelia, *serviceableness*, the true lost wife of Hamlet, is marked as having a Greek name by that of her brother, Laertes; and its signification is once exquisitely alluded to in that brother's last word of her, where her gentle preciousness is opposed to the uselessness of the churlish clergy." — Ruskin, *Munera Pulveris*.

the *Arcadia* also occurs 'Montano,' the name given to Reynaldo in the First Quarto. 'Reynaldo' is from Lyly's *Euphues*. 'Laertes' in Greek legend is the father of Ulysses. 'Polonius,' Walker suggests, is a corruption of Apollonius. "'Fortinbras' is evidently Fortebras, or Strong-arm, of the family of Ferumbras of the romances, or may have come directly from Niccolo Fortebraccio, the famous leader of the *condottieri*." [1] The sturdy Roman name 'Horatio' is that of Andrea's faithful friend, the son of Hieronimo, in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The First Part of Jeronimo*, — "Horatio murdered in his father's bower." For 'Rosencrantz' and 'Guildenstern' see note, II, ii, 1. It is an interesting fact that, under the date 1577, on the same page of a German album preserved in the Royal Public Library at Stuttgart, are the autograph signatures: 'Jörgen Rossenkrantz,' 'P. Guldenstern.' This album belonged originally to one who had spent some years in Copenhagen, and these signatures are of colleagues who had sat in the Danish Council of Regency during the minority of Christian IV.[2] 'Osric' [3] may be from a non-extant play, *Marshal Osricke*, written by T. Heywood in conjunction with Wentworth Smith and produced on the stage in 1602. "The names given to the ambassador, *Voltemar*, *Voltemand*, *Valtemand*, *Voltumand*,[4] are so many corruptions of the Danish *Valdemar*." — Brandes. Brandes, naturally an enthusiast for everything Danish connected with the play, has the following interesting notes as to how Shakespeare may have secured

[1] Elliot Browne, *The Athenæum*, July 26, 1876.

[2] *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, XXV.

[3] For 'Osric' the First Quarto has 'a Bragart Gentleman.'

[4] These varied spellings are from Quartos and Folios. See textual notes, I, ii, 25; II, ii, 58.

what he regards as intimate knowledge of localities and traits of manners:[1]

Hamlet being a Dane and his destiny being acted out in distant Denmark — a name not yet so familiar in England as it was soon to be, when, with the new king, a Danish princess came to the throne — Shakespeare would naturally seize whatever opportunities lay in his way of gathering intelligence as to the manners and customs of this little-known country. — In the year 1585 a troupe of English players had appeared in the courtyard of the Town-Hall of Elsinore. If we are justified in assuming this troupe to have been the same which we find in the following year established at the Danish Court, it numbered among its members three persons who, at the time when Shakespeare was turning over in his mind the idea of *Hamlet*, belonged to his company of actors . . . Other English actors . . . under the management of Thomas Sackville, had performed at Copenhagen in 1596 at the coronation of Christian IV. . . . It is in consequence of what he had learned from his comrades that Shakespeare has transferred the action of *Hamlet* from Jutland to Elsinore, which they had visited and no doubt described to him. That is how he comes to know of the Castle at Elsinore (finished about a score of years earlier), though he does not mention the name of Kronborg.

Shakespeare and Montaigne

That Shakespeare was a reader of Montaigne cannot be doubted by any one who compares the description of Gonzalo's ideal commonwealth in *The Tempest* with the almost identical description given by Montaigne. *Hamlet* has been found by some investigators to be saturated with Montaigne, and Jacob Feis[2] argues ingeniously that Hamlet is to be identified with Montaigne and that the play was written to discredit

[1] *William Shakespeare, a Critical Study*, Book II, Chapter XII.

[2] *Shakespeare and Montaigne: an Endeavour to explain the Tendency of Hamlet from allusions in contemporary works.*

Montaigne's opinions. Herr Stedefeld similarly insists [1] that *Hamlet* was written in the interests of practical Christianity as against the scepticism and cosmopolitanism of the French essayist. John M. Robertson [2] has brought together a large number of passages to show how deeply and widely Montaigne influenced Shakespeare, a view held to a great extent by Brandes. "It may be said at once that of all the parallel passages adduced there is not one, except that from *The Tempest*, which may not resolve itself into a mere coincidence." — Churton Collins.[3] In France the contention that Montaigne's influence upon Shakespeare was profound and far-reaching has been warmly supported, M. Philarète Chasles [4] attributing to this the most striking characteristics of all Shakespeare's later and greater plays.

II. DATE OF COMPOSITION

The date of composition of the first draft of *Hamlet* falls within July, 1602, the later time limit (*terminus ante quem*), and 1598, the earlier time limit (*terminus post quem*). The weight of evidence is in favor of 1601–1602. The second draft, represented in the Second Quarto, was made probably in 1603–1604.

External Evidence

1. *Negative.* *Hamlet* is not mentioned by Meres in the *Palladis Tamia*, published in 1598, which gives a list of

[1] *Hamlet: ein Tendenzdrama.*
[2] *Montaigne and Shakspere.*
[3] *Studies in Shakespeare: Shakespeare and Montaigne.*
[4] *L'Angleterre au Seizième Siècle.*

twelve noteworthy Shakespeare plays in existence at that time. This establishes 1598 as a probable *terminus post quem*.

2. *Positive.* (1) *The Stationers' Registers.* The earliest unmistakable reference to Shakespeare's play is the following entry in *The Stationers' Registers*,[1] under the date 1602:

> xxvj to Julij
>
> **James Robertes** Entred for his Copie vnder the handes of master PASFEILD and master **waterson** warden A booke called '*the Revenge of HAMLETT Prince* [*of*] *Denmarke*' *as yᵗ was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes*. . . . vjd[2]

Though Shakespeare's name does not appear in this entry, it is well known that he was one of the Lord Chamberlain's Men up to the time of James's succession in May, 1603 (see note, II, ii, 330–354), and the reference to 'A booke' in connection with this company of actors identifies '*the Revenge of Hamlett Prince* [*of*] *Denmarke*' with his play.

(2) *The First Quarto.* The *Hamlet* referred to in *The Stationers' Registers* was published in 1603, in quarto and with Shakespeare's name on the title-page. This is the now much discussed First Quarto, which probably represents in imperfect form the first draft of the play. (See below, Early Editions.)

(3) *The Second Quarto.* In 1604 the Second Quarto was published, "enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie." (See below, Early Editions.) This gives the play in what is virtually its final form.

[1] Professor E. Arber's *Transcripts of the Stationers' Registers* (1554–1640), 4 vols., 1875–1877.

[2] sixpence. This was the usual price of a Quarto.

Internal Evidence

1. *Julius Cæsar and Hamlet.* There is interesting cumulative evidence that the composition of *Hamlet* is in time immediately after that of *Julius Cæsar* in 1600–1601, the date generally agreed upon. This evidence includes foreshadowings of *Hamlet* everywhere in *Julius Cæsar*, the frequent references to Cæsar in *Hamlet*, the kinship in character of Brutus and Hamlet, the treatment of the supernatural, and the development of the revenge motive.

2. *Allusion to the Players.* In 1601 the members of the Lord Chamberlain's company seem to have been in disgrace at court on account of the production of *Richard II* on the eve of the Essex rebellion. They were not invited that year to take part in the court festivities at Christmas. While there is no direct evidence that in consequence of lack of court patronage the members of the company went on tour in the provinces, it is extremely probable that they did so, and there may be a 'topical' allusion to this in II, ii, 323. What is certain is that between 1600 and 1601 children companies, especially the 'Children of the Chapel,' acting at the Blackfriars Theatre in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, *The Poetaster*, etc., which plays were involved in the 'war of the theatres' (see note, II, ii, 348), had become formidable rivals to the regular actors. In the First Quarto this is the reason assigned for the "travelling." In the Second Quarto this passage is omitted (see note, II, ii, 330–354).

3. *Style and Diction.* The diction of *Hamlet*, the quality of the blank verse, the character of the prose, the proportion of prose to verse (see below, Versification and Diction), and the application of the various verse and diction

tests[1] strengthen the case for the date given by the external and the internal evidence. The rich, full thought of the speeches and soliloquies in the Second Quarto, and the way in which all that is incidental and circumstantial is made subordinate to the living energies of mind and soul, justify placing the composition of the revised play as near as possible to 1604.

III. EARLY EDITIONS

Quartos

1. *The First and the Second Quarto.* Reproduced on the following pages are the title-pages of the First Quarto (Q_1) and the Second Quarto (Q_2). To a certain extent these title-pages tell their own tale, that of the Second Quarto indicating clearly the imperfect and unauthorized character of the First Quarto. The relation of these two editions to each other has involved as much dispute as the character of Hamlet himself. The First Quarto is only about half the length of the Second Quarto; the text[2] is mutilated and corrupt; Corambis and Montano represent Polonius and Reynaldo respectively; Francisco is "first Centinel"; a Duke and a Duchess are the chief characters in the "Mouse-trap" play (see note, III, ii, 219–220); the Queen is represented as concerting and actively coöperating with Hamlet against the King's life, and she has an interview of considerable

[1] There is an excellent summary of these tests in Dowden's *Shakspere Primer*. See also Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature*, Vol. II, pages 47–51.

[2] Given in Griggs's Facsimile Quartos, Vietor's Parallel Text *Hamlet*, Wright's Cambridge Shakespeare, Vol. IX, and Furness's Variorum *Hamlet*, Vol. II.

THE

Tragicall Hiſtorie of HAMLET

Prince of Denmarke

By William Shake-ſpeare.

As it hath beene diuerſe times acted by his Highneſſe ſeruants in the Cittie of London : as alſo in the two Vniuerſities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elſe-where

At London printed for N: L. and Iohn Trundell.
1603.

THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke.

By William Shakeſpeare.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almoſt as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be ſold at his ſhoppe vnder Saint Dunſtons Church in Fleetſtreet. 1604.

length with Horatio, who informs her of Hamlet's escape from the ship bound for England, and of his safe return to Denmark. In the First Quarto is a singular absence of those passages which throw light on Hamlet's motives and mental attitude. In the Second Quarto little is added in the way of action and incident; the enlargement is mainly in the contemplative and imaginative parts, and here the difference between the two editions is very great and of such a kind as to evince a most astonishing growth of intellectual power and resource.

A reasonable theory of the relation of these two Quartos, and one widely accepted, is that the First Quarto represents in an imperfect form the first draft of Shakespeare's play, and was printed from 'copy' obtained surreptitiously, probably from the notes of some shorthand writer,[1] "supplemented by a reference to the authentic copy in the library of the theatre,"[2] and that the Second Quarto represents the play revised and enlarged by Shakespeare.

In the Clarendon Press *Hamlet* the following conclusion is advanced "with some diffidence" by the editors, W. G. Clark and Dr. W. Aldis Wright:

That there was an old play on the story of Hamlet, some portions of which are still preserved in the quarto of 1603; that about the

[1] There are interesting allusions in Elizabethan literature to pirating plays by means of shorthand. See Dewischeit's *Shakespeare und die Stenographie*, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, XXXIV.

[2] This quotation is from Dr. W. Aldis Wright, editor of the Cambridge Shakespeare, who, finding many errors which seem like errors of a copyist rather than of a hearer, adds: "Very probably the man employed for this purpose was some inferior actor or servant, who would necessarily work in haste and by stealth, and in any case would not be likely to work very conscientiously for the printer or bookseller who was paying him to deceive his masters."

year 1602 Shakespeare took this and began to remodel it for the stage, as he had done with other plays; that the quarto of 1603 represents the play after it had been retouched by him to a certain extent, but before his alterations were complete; and that in the quarto of 1604 we have for the first time the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare.

2. *The Later Quartos.* After the publication of the Second Quarto the popularity of *Hamlet* was attested by a series of Quartos, each printed, with slightly modernized spelling, seemingly from its predecessor. In 1605 appeared the Third Quarto (Q_3) which had, with the exception of the date of publication, a title-page identical with that of the Second Quarto, and is in the main a reprint of that edition. In 1607 a new *Hamlet* entry appeared in *The Stationers' Registers*, making over the ownership of the copyright to John Smythick (Smethwicke), whose name appears on the title-page[1] of the Fourth Quarto (Q_4), which was published in 1611. On this title-page the play is no longer called *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet*, but, as in the Folios, *The Tragedy* (*Tragedie*) *of Hamlet*. The Fifth Quarto (Q_5), undated,[2] but obviously a reprint, with slightly modernized spelling, was probably the last edition of *Hamlet* to appear before 1616. Only two other plays, *Richard the Third* and *1 Henry the Fourth*, reached five editions in Shakespeare's lifetime.[3] The Sixth Quarto (Q_6), in almost every particular a reprint of the Fifth, was published in 1637. Subsequently appeared a

[1] Reproduced in facsimile as the frontispiece of this volume.

[2] Malone and Collier, identifying it with the 1607 entry in *The Stationers' Registers*, assign it to that year; Halliwell thinks that it was "possibly printed about 1609."

[3] Sidney Lee, not recognizing the Fifth Quarto, probably because it is undated, groups *Hamlet* with *Richard the Second* and *Romeo and Juliet* as plays that achieved four editions in Shakespeare's lifetime.

succession of Quartos, now called 'Players' Quartos,' which were used freely by Rowe, Pope, and other eighteenth century editors (without acknowledgment) in their efforts to emend the text. Some interesting variant readings from the 'Players' Quarto' of 1676 are given in the textual notes of this edition with the symbol Q (1676) attached.

Folios

In the First Folio (1623), designated in this edition F_1, *The Tragedie of Hamlet*, as it is called in the running title, stands between *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, occupying pages 152–280, in the division named 'Tragedies.' The Folio text has from 85 to 98 lines not given in the Second Quarto, and it omits 218 lines given there. These and many minor differences between the two texts are indicated in the textual notes of this edition. It is plain that these two texts are from separate stage manuscripts which for acting purposes have been cut differently. The Folio text, in the light of its omissions and additions, may be described as "more theatrical, but less literary, than that of 1604." — Dowden.

The Second Folio, F_2 (1632), corrects many of the misprints of the First Folio, and this corrected text is repeated with few changes, except in the way of slightly modernized spelling, in the Third Folio, F_3 (1663, 1664), and in the Fourth Folio, F_4 (1685).

Rowe's Editions

The first critical editor of Shakespeare's plays was Nicholas Rowe, poet laureate to George I. His first edition was issued in 1709 in six octavo volumes. In this edition Rowe, an experienced playwright, marked the entrances and exits of the

characters, and introduced many stage directions. In the Quartos there is no division into acts and scenes, and in the Folios the division extends only to the second scene of the second act. This division Rowe completed, and added the first list of dramatis personæ. A second edition, in eight volumes, was published in 1714. Rowe followed very closely the text of the Fourth Folio, but modernized spelling, punctuation, and occasionally grammar.

IV. VERSIFICATION AND DICTION

Blank Verse

The greater part of *Hamlet* is in blank verse — the unrhymed, iambic five-stress (decasyllabic) verse, or iambic pentameter, introduced into England from Italy by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, about 1540, and used by him in a translation of the second and fourth books of Vergil's *Æneid*. Nicholas Grimald (*Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557) employed the measure for the first time in English original poetry, and its roots began to strike deep into British soil and absorb substance. It is peculiarly significant that Sackville and Norton should have used it as the measure of *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy (performed by "the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple" on January 18, 1561, and first printed in 1565). About the time when Shakespeare arrived in London the infinite possibilities of blank verse as a vehicle for dramatic poetry and passion were being shown by Kyd, and above all by Marlowe. Blank verse as used by Shakespeare is really an epitome of the development of the measure in connection with the English drama. In his earlier plays the

blank verse is often similar to that of *Gorboduc*. The tendency is to adhere to the syllable-counting principle, to make the line the unit, the sentence and phrase coinciding with the line (end-stopped verse), and to use five perfect iambic feet to the line.[1] In plays of the middle period, such as *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, written between 1596 and 1600, the blank verse is more like that of Kyd and Marlowe, with less monotonous regularity in the structure and an increasing tendency to carry on the sense from one line to another without a syntactical or rhetorical pause at the end of the line (run-on verse, *enjambement*). Redundant syllables now abound, and the melody is richer and fuller. In Shakespeare's later plays the blank verse breaks away from bondage to formal line limits, and sweeps all along with it in freedom, power, and organic unity.

In the 2358 lines of blank verse in *Hamlet* are found stress modifications of all kinds. There are 528 feminine (or double) endings, 8 light endings, and 205 speech endings not coincident with line endings. Such variations give to the verse flexibility and power in addition to music and harmony. It is significant that in *Hamlet* are no weak endings. Light endings and weak endings[2] are found most abundantly in Shakespeare's very latest plays. The blank verse of "Æneas' tale to Dido," II, ii, 437–505, is purposely inflated and bombastic for the reason given in the note, II, ii, 434.

[1] There are a few such normal lines in *Hamlet*. For example, see I, i, 8, 65, 148, 166; ii, 65, etc.

[2] Light endings, as defined by Ingram, are such words as *am*, *can*, *do*, *has*, *I*, *thou*, etc., on which "the voice can to a certain small extent dwell"; weak endings are words like *and*, *for*, *from*, *if*, *in*, *of*, *or*, which "we are forced to run . . . in pronunciation . . . into the closest connection with the opening words of the succeeding line."

Alexandrines

While French prosodists apply the term Alexandrine only to a twelve-syllable line with the pause after the sixth syllable, it is generally used in English to designate iambic six-stress verse, or iambic hexameter, of which we have a normal example in I, v, 163. This was a favorite Elizabethan measure, and it was common in moral plays and the earlier heroic drama. English literature has no finer examples of this verse than the last line of each stanza of *The Faerie Queene*. In *Hamlet* are about 40 Alexandrines. Care should be taken to distinguish between Alexandrines and such trimeter couplets as are found in I, v, 6. Shakespeare seems to have used such trimeter couplets for rapid dialogue and retort. See Abbott, § 500.

Rhyme

1. *Couplets.* A progress from more to less rhyme in the regular dialogue is a sure index to Shakespeare's development as a dramatist and a master of expression. In the early *Love's Labour's Lost* are more than 500 rhyming five-stress iambic couplets; in the very late *The Winter's Tale* there is not one.[1] Exclusive of the 'Mouse-trap' play, III, ii, there are in *Hamlet* 27 rhyming couplets, of which nearly a half are exit tags; most of the others are those sententious generalizations which are so often in this kind of verse. An unusual number of the exit tags have also the character of rhymed maxims. It is noteworthy that Polonius's precepts are in blank verse.

[1] The Chorus speech introducing Act IV is excepted as not part of the regular dialogue.

2. '*Mouse-trap*' *Couplets.* The 'Mouse-trap' play is introduced by three iambic four-stress lines rhyming together, III, ii, 130–132; then come 78 lines of rhymed five-stress iambic couplets, most of them formally closed, giving the peculiarly archaic and artificial effect which differentiates the play within the play from the play itself. As in the case of the Masque couplets in *The Tempest*, this use of rhyme, contingent on special reasons for its introduction, has no weight in determining the date of the play by application of the rhyme test.

3. *Song Snatches.* Ophelia's first three song snatches — "How should I your true-love know," IV, v, 23–26, "He is dead and gone, lady," IV, v, 29–32, "White his shroud as the mountain snow," IV, v, 34, 36–38 — are four-stress trochaic (catalectic) alternating with irregular three-stress; "To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day," IV, v, 46–49, is irregular iambic four-stress and three-stress alternating; "They bore him bare-fac'd on the bier," IV, v, 146–148, is iambic four-stress, with a conventional refrain; "And will he not come again," IV, v, 170–179, is irregular three-stress iambic, with dactylic effects in the third and the fourth lines of the stanza. The quatrain that Polonius reads from Hamlet's letter, II, ii, 116–119, is iambic three-stress; the norm of Hamlet's snatches, III, ii, 248–251, 257–260, is the ballad stanza[1] of four-stress iambic alternating with three-stress; so is that of the stanzas sung by the Clown "at grave-making," V, i, 59–62, 69–72, 89–92.

[1] The regular measure of the old ballads seems to have been originally four-stress throughout, with a tendency to drop the last stress in the alternating lines. The development of this tendency gives the measure of the *Robin Hood* ballads, etc., and the 'common metre' of modern hymns.

Prose

In the development of the English drama the use of prose as a vehicle of expression entitled to equal rights with verse was due to Lyly. He was the first to use prose with power and distinction in original plays, and did memorable service in preparing the way for Shakespeare's achievement. Interesting attempts have been made to explain Shakespeare's distinctive use of verse and prose; and of recent years there has been much discussion of the question "whether we are justified in supposing that Shakespeare was guided by any fixed principle in his employment of verse and prose, or whether he merely employed them, as fancy suggested, for the sake of variety and relief."[1] It is a significant fact that in many of his earlier plays there is little or no prose, and that the proportion of prose to blank verse increases with the decrease of rhyme. In *Hamlet* five kinds of prose may be distinguished: (1) The prose of formal documents, as in Hamlet's three letters, II, ii, 120–124; IV, vi, 12–26; IV, vii, 43–47. In Shakespeare, prose is the usual medium for letters, proclamations, and other formal documents. (2) The prose of 'low life' and the speech of comic characters, as in the grave-digging scene, V, i. This is a development of the humorous prose found, for example, in Greene's comedies that deal with country life. (3) The colloquial prose of dialogue, as in the talk between Hamlet and the First Player, II, ii, 523–534, and in the conversation between Hamlet and Horatio,

[1] Professor J. Churton Collins's *Shakespeare as a Prose Writer*. See Delius's *Die Prosa in Shakespeares Dramen* (*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, V, 227–273); Janssen's *Die Prosa in Shakespeares Dramen*; Professor Hiram Corson's *An Introduction to the Study of Shakespeare*, pp. 83–98.

V, i. In both these passages, as in the grave-digging scene, the prose diction gives temporary emotional relief and prepares for the heightening of the dramatic pitch in the scenes which immediately follow. (4) The prose of abnormal mentality, as in the scenes where Hamlet plays the madman, or in IV, v, where Ophelia appears in her madness. It is an interesting fact that Shakespeare should so often make persons whose state of mind is abnormal, or seemingly so, speak in prose. "The idea underlying this custom of Shakespeare's evidently is that the regular rhythm of verse would be inappropriate where the mind is supposed to have lost its balance and to be at the mercy of chance impressions coming from without (as sometimes with Lear), or of ideas emerging from its unconscious depths and pursuing one another across its passive surface." — A. C. Bradley.[1] (5) Impassioned, or highly wrought poetical and rhetorical prose, as in II, ii, 294–303. Here Shakespeare raises prose to the sublimest pitch of verse. "It would be hard to cull from the whole body of our prose literature a passage which should demonstrate more strikingly the splendour and the majesty of our language, when freed from the shackles of verse." — Churton Collins. Why this passage is in prose has called forth interesting discussions, to which Corson and Verity have contributed notes of value: "It . . . continues the *form* of the preceding dialogue, for the sake of general harmony of effect, but breathes into that form the spirit of the loftiest imaginative ardour." — Verity.

[1] Bradley thus comments on the fact that Hamlet speaks in verse in the quarrel with Laertes at Ophelia's grave, and in the final scene of the play: "I wonder the disuse of prose in these two scenes has not been observed, and used as an argument, by those who think that Hamlet, with the commission in his pocket, is now resolute."

V. SCENE OF ACTION

Hamlet is almost as faithful as *The Tempest* to the unity of place. Elsinore is the scene throughout, except possibly in IV, iv. The scene is even more specialized: it is the castle at Elsinore,[1] except in IV, iv, and V, i. Elsinore, the Danish Helsingör, is not mentioned by Saxo in the old Hamlet story, and as it was his birthplace it is natural to suppose he would have done so had there been a link of connection. The name probably came into the Hamlet story after English players had acted at Elsinore in 1585–1587.

VI. DURATION OF ACTION

Whatever view be taken of the dramatic time of action in *Hamlet*, there are inconsistencies and discrepancies when the matter is judged mechanically by chronometers and almanacs. Some of these discrepancies and difficulties are referred to in the notes to the text, but they vanish into thin air when the difference between a poet's point of view and a scientist's is recognized.[2] The action of the play is from midnight at a season of the year when the weather is "bitter cold," until the end of May or the beginning of June, as shown by Ophelia's flowers.[3] The duration of the action may be estimated

[1] What modern editors call 'Polonius's house' might just as well be called 'Polonius's rooms in the castle.'

[2] "Shakespeare . . . did not trouble himself to reconcile . . . inconsistencies which practical experience as an actor would tell him do not trouble the spectator." — Hall Griffin.

[3] "Rosemary and rue are evergreens, but the violets are withered, while fennel, columbines, daisies, and pansies are in bloom; the willow-trees are in leaf, and Ophelia can make garlands of crow-flowers, nettles, and 'long purples.'" — Hall Griffin.

at from six to eight days extended over a period of from two to four months. Daniel gives the time of the play as seven days, or eight if the reader prefers to assign a separate day to the last scene. His formal time scheme is:

Day 1. — I, i – iii.
Day 2. — I, iv–v.
An interval of rather more than two months.
Day 3. — II.
Day 4. — III, i–iv; IV, i–iii.
Day 5. — IV, iv.
An interval — a week?
Day 6. — IV, v–vii.
Day 7. — V.

In Marshall's time scheme the interval between Day 5 and Day 6 is "about two months"; two days are supposed to elapse between Day 6 and Day 7, and the action of the last act is extended over two days.

VII. DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Hamlet is a romantic tragedy of a normal Shakespearian type, in which is represented a conflict between an individual and certain forces which environ, antagonize, and overwhelm. The unity of action and of interest is the personality of Hamlet. He is peculiarly, pathetically, alone amid the antagonizing forces, and the conception of his character fuses into a unity of perennial human interest the heterogeneous elements derived from the old story, the old play, the Senecan tradition, and the popular contemporary tragedy of blood and revenge.

The very soliloquies become "landmarks in the depiction of the inner struggle and in the general progress of the action." — A. H. Thorndike. Highly complex in construction, the play is simple in dramatic technique.[1] This, along with its remarkable human interest, has made it one of the most effective of acting plays. Its popularity on the stage has been as marked as its appeal to philosopher and cloistered student. It is a superb tragedy of action; it is at the same time one of the supreme world-tragedies of thought. In *Hamlet*, as in every great drama, five stages may be noted in the plot development: (1) the exposition, or introduction; (2) the complication, rising action, or growth; (3) the climax, crisis, or turning point; (4) the resolution, falling action, or consequence; and (5) the dénouement, catastrophe, or conclusion.

Analysis by Act and Scene[2]

I. The Exposition, or Introduction

Act I, Scene i. The play opens amid agitation and gloom (see note, I, i, 1–3). The serious situation of affairs at Elsinore is disclosed; the character of the late king is described, and his reappearance after death indicates a mysterious wrong to be righted. The adventures of young Fortinbras are recited, and his prowess prepares for the important position he is to assume at the close of the play.

[1] For suggestive and stimulating notes on the dramatic construction of *Hamlet*, see Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 40–67, 89–174.

[2] "It must be understood that a play can be analyzed into very different schemes of plot. It must not be thought that one of these schemes is right and the rest wrong; but the schemes will be better or worse in proportion as — while of course representing correctly the facts of the play — they bring out more or less of what ministers to our sense of design." — Moulton.

Act I, Scene ii. The corrupt conditions at court are revealed, and Hamlet is introduced, brooding over the situation and dejected at the thought of his mother's hasty marriage to such a man as he conceives Claudius to be. In this frame of mind he is told of the Ghost, and his suspicions are aroused.

Act I, Scene iii. Polonius and Ophelia are introduced, and the corrupt influence of the court is further shown in the dialogue between Laertes and his father. The relations between Hamlet and Ophelia are indicated (see Coleridge's note, quoted in annotation, I, iii, 1).

Act I, Scene iv — Scene v, 1–28. After a remarkable self-revelation by Hamlet of his mental attitude and point of view, the Ghost appears to him, and in words that develop to a thrilling climax tells him definitely that his father was murdered, and gives him his first command, "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder." The exposition of the play is now complete. The leading characters have been introduced; the opening situations are explained; the machinery is ready to be set in motion.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth

Act I, Scene v, 29–181. A definite motive for action by Hamlet has now been supplied. With his spirited reply, lines 29–31, to the Ghost's call to revenge begins the complication. The machinery of the play is now in motion. The first distinct element in the complication is in the second command of the Ghost, lines 85–86 (see note).

Act II, Scene i. The quiet talk between Polonius and Reynaldo, lines 1–73, serves as a relief to the excitement of the preceding scene and throws more light on the characters of Polonius and Laertes; the conversation between Ophelia and her father, lines 73–119, first introduces Hamlet with his "antic disposition" on. Polonius implies that at court the prince is already regarded as mad, and he concludes that he is crazed for love of Ophelia. Whether Hamlet's appearance and behavior as described by Ophelia were part of the "antic disposition," or simply indicated his intense emotion at taking leave of one whom he passionately loved, is an interesting question.

Act II, Scene ii. Among the dramatic motives in this long scene are (1) the varied effect of Hamlet's "antic disposition" upon the groups at court represented by Claudius, Gertrude, the newly arrived Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Polonius, and Ophelia; (2) the emphasizing of Hamlet's dilatoriness by the return of the ambassadors sent to Norway (I, ii), their mission accomplished; (3) renewed interest in the cause of Fortinbras; and (4) the arrival of the players, and the beginning of Hamlet's plans for the great play scene. Throughout may be traced the working of what Bradley calls the "principle of alternation," an oscillating movement of the action, now in favor of Hamlet, now in favor of Claudius.

Act III, Scene i. Hamlet's interview with Ophelia brings the crisis in her life history (see note, III, i, 105), and it convinces Claudius that love is not the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior. Suspecting the true reason, he plans to send his nephew to England.

Act III, Scene ii. This scene is a triumph of dramatic construction. It opens quietly with the famous exposition of the principles of practical dramatic art in the instructions to the players, and a conversation with Horatio in which he takes his friend into his confidence. As the court assembles to witness the play, Hamlet's increasing nervous tension betrays itself in every word and action. Then comes his complete triumph in the "unkennelling" of the "occulted guilt," as Claudius rushes from the scene with the cry, "Give me some light! Away!"

Act III, Scene iii, 1–72. As the climax or crisis of the play approaches, the oscillation of the action seems to cease; plotter and counter-plotter appear to have equal advantage. The play not only convinced Hamlet of Claudius's guilt; it showed Claudius how dangerous Hamlet was, and he completes his arrangements for getting rid of him forever.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point[1]

Act III, Scene iii, 73–98. Dramatic literature has no passage of greater insight or power than Hamlet's sparing of Claudius when

[1] Many interpreters and students of dramatic technique find the 'turning point' in the play scene, III, ii, 210–247.

he finds the king alone and wholly in his power. This is the turning point in the play. From now on to the catastrophe the antagonizing forces control the action.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence

Act III, Scene iv. In this, "the closet scene," the emotional intensity of the play is at full tide, and poignantly effective is the inversion of the natural order in the administration of scathing rebuke to a mother by a son. The leading dramatic motives of the scene are the killing of Polonius — which is in sharp contrast to the sparing of Claudius — and the reappearance of the Ghost "to whet" the "almost blunted purpose" and recall the previous mandate, "nor let thy soul contrive against thy mother aught." The climactic significance of Hamlet's refusal to kill Claudius is emphasized by this re-appearance.

Act IV, Scene i — Scene iii. The consequences of the killing of Polonius are revealed in the strengthening of the case of Claudius against Hamlet. Claudius is justified in guarding the prince until he can be sent away.

Act IV, Scene iv. The references to young Fortinbras in I, i, and II, ii, have prepared for his appearance in this scene. His character as a strong, practical man of affairs affords an effective contrast to that of Hamlet, and this contrast is expressed by Hamlet himself in the great soliloquy with which the scene closes.

Act IV, Scene v. More consequences of the killing of Polonius are revealed. The death of her father following the loss of her lover is the cause of Ophelia's madness. Laertes, too, is home from Paris vowing swift revenge for his father's murder and hurried, unworthy burial.

Act IV, Scene vi. The letter to Horatio brings Hamlet again to the front, and announces that the news of his return to Denmark will soon be known to Claudius.

Act IV, Scene vii. Hamlet's return stimulates Claudius to quick action. Claudius finds Laertes a willing tool in the arrangement of a base plot against the life of Hamlet, and the death of his sister strengthens Laertes in his scheme for revenge.

Act V, Scene i. Like the "Porter scene" in *Macbeth*, the grave-digging scene is a signal instance of relief in Shakespearian tragedy

by the introduction of humorous matter. The humor here is not out of keeping with the scene of action, and passes naturally into the moralizing of Hamlet. In high tragedy the sympathy must at the close be with the hero, and the fact that it is Ophelia's grave that is being dug, strangely increases the sense of pity for Hamlet. By the grave his love of her finds passionate expression. This confession makes him known to Laertes; and the antagonizing forces in this way gain a distinct advantage.

Act V, Scene ii, 1–214. To complete the resolution or falling action, Hamlet tells Horatio how he managed to defeat the king's scheme for getting rid of him. The brief scene with Osric follows, giving a new glimpse of Hamlet's wit and intellectual edge, and then comes the invitation to the fatal fencing match. The falling action closes with Hamlet's expression of a presentiment of evil.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion

Act V, Scene ii, 215–393. The final consequences of the death of Polonius come in the holocaust of the catastrophe. At the last, Hamlet is a man of supreme action, who dominates the awful dénouement. With dramatic fitness the best and the worst in each of the characters find expression in their final speeches. The nobility and the sweetness of Hamlet's nature exhale in his last words, so hauntingly beautiful after the fierce invective with which he stabs Claudius to his doom. With the entry of Fortinbras a new order begins, and day breaks along the valley of the shadow of death.

VIII. THE CHARACTERS

Hamlet

Schlegel describes *Hamlet* as a "tragedy of thought." This is its character among the world's great dramas, and it takes this character from the hero's mind. Hamlet everywhere floods the scene with intellectual wealth in the varied forms of wit, humor, subtle psychology, high philosophy,

and magnificent poetry. With large stores of moral and practical wisdom, and affluent with the spoils of learning, of genius, and of art, he enriches and adorns whatever he touches, making it fresh, racy, delectable, and instructive. And he does all this without any sign of exertion, does it with the ease and fluency of a free native impulse, so as to preclude the idea of its being a special purpose with him. For, with all his redundancy of mental treasure, he nowhere betrays the least ostentation of intellect. It is plainly the unlabored, unaffected issue of a mind so full that it cannot choose but overflow.

But perhaps the leading characteristic of this play lies in its strong resemblance to the classic tragedy, in that the action is, in a very peculiar degree, dominated by what the ancients called Fate, but what to-day is termed Providence. No modern drama leaves a deeper impression of a superhuman power presiding over a war of irregular and opposing forces and calmly working out its own purpose through the baffled, disjointed, and conflicting purposes of human agents. Of course the poet's genius is itself the providence of the play. But here again his insight is so profound and so just, his workmanship so true to the course of human experience, that all things come to pass just as if ordered by the Divine Providence of the world. And however the persons go at cross aims with each other or themselves, they still move true to the author's aim; their confused and broken schemes he uses as the elements of a higher order, and the harshest discords of their plane of thought serve to enrich and deepen the harmonies of his, their very blunders and failures ministering to his success, their wilfulness to his law, their madness to his reason.

Hamlet's Sanity

The leading opinions as to Hamlet's sanity are: (1) that he is "neither mad nor pretends to be so";[1] (2) that he feigns madness; (3) that at times he is mad and at times feigns madness; and (4) that he is really mad. Furness asks the advocates of the theory of feigned insanity "how they account for Hamlet's being able, in the flash of time between the vanishing of the Ghost and the coming of Horatio and Marcellus, to form, horror-struck as he was, a plan for the whole conduct of his future life?" The advocates of the theory of real insanity, among whom are many distinguished mental pathologists, lay stress upon the facts (1) that madness is "compatible with some of the ripest and richest manifestations of intellect," (2) that Hamlet himself both affirms and denies his madness, and (3) that at the last, in his generous apology, his solemn appeal, to Laertes, V, ii, 216–234, where it is surely unjust to pronounce him insincere, he alleges his mental disorder as fairly entitling him to the pardon which he asks for the offence he has given.[2]

A reasonable view of Hamlet's mental condition is that in native texture he is a man of finest moral sensibility and intellectual sensitiveness, with a tendency to the noble melancholy of all great natures; and that (1) the discovery of his mother's conduct and the shameless conditions at court, so soon after his father's death, (2) his interview with the Ghost, (3) the Ghost's appalling disclosures and injunctions,

[1] Furness, Variorum *Hamlet*, Vol. I, Preface, ix.

[2] In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare a plea was made for Hamlet's insanity, and evidence was produced in support of these three propositions.

and (4) his instant view and grasp of the whole dire situation in which he is now placed, have to a certain degree disturbed the equipoise of his mind, shaken it to its depths, but shaken it as storms shake trees to strengthen and make more efficient. Such a temperament and such an experience account naturally both for the skilful assumption of the "antic disposition" and for those outbursts of abnormal vehemence which mark Hamlet's conduct from time to time.

Did Hamlet Procrastinate?

The heart of the Hamlet mystery, the core of the Hamlet controversy, is in the seeming delay of the hero to carry out the command of the Ghost. The theories of this delay may be grouped as either (1) subjective, making the reasons wholly personal and temperamental, or (2) objective, finding the causes in the nature of the task assigned and in difficulties wholly external.[1]

SUBJECTIVE THEORIES

The leading interpretations that find the reasons for delay in personal and temperamental difficulties may be classed as (1) the 'sentimental' theory, represented by Goethe; (2) the 'weakness of will' theory, represented by Schlegel and Coleridge;[2] and (3) the 'conscience' theory, represented by Ulrici. The central position in the theories of these interpreters is here given in their own words.

[1] A summary of Hamlet theories is given by A. H. Tolman in *The Views about Hamlet and Other Essays*, and by Charlton M. Lewis in *The Genesis of Hamlet*.

[2] Dowden's theory, given in *Shakspere, his Mind and Art*, may be regarded as a modification of this.

GOETHE

Goethe's interpretation of Hamlet's character is in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, IV, iii–xiii, V, iv–xi. The following is Carlyle's translation of what Goethe calls "the key to Hamlet's whole procedure":

> "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right!"

In these words, I imagine, will be found the key to Hamlet's whole procedure. To me it is clear that Shakspeare meant, in the present case, to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it. In this view the whole play seems to me to be composed. There is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should have borne only pleasant flowers in its bosom: the roots expand, the jar is shivered.

A lovely, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden it cannot bear and must not cast away. All duties are holy for him: the present is too hard. Impossibilities have been required of him, — not in themselves impossibilities, but such for him. He winds and turns, and torments himself; he advances and recoils; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind; at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts, yet still without recovering his peace of mind.

SCHLEGEL

From Black's translation of Schlegel's *Ueber dramatische Kunst und Litteratur*:

Hamlet has no firm belief either in himself or in anything else. From expressions of religious confidence he passes over to sceptical doubts. He believes in the ghost of his father when he sees it; and as soon as it has disappeared, it appears to him almost in the light of a deception. He has even got so far as to say, "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." The poet loses himself with his hero in the labyrinths of thought, in which we find neither end nor beginning. The stars themselves, from the

course of events, afford no answer to the question so urgently proposed to them. A voice commissioned, as it would appear, by heaven from another world demands vengeance for a monstrous enormity, and the demand remains without effect. The criminals are at last punished, but, as it were, by an accidental blow, and not in a manner requisite to announce with solemnity a warning example of justice to the world. Irresolute foresight, cunning treachery, and impetuous rage are hurried on to the same destruction; the less guilty or the innocent are equally involved in the general destruction. The destiny of humanity is there exhibited as a gigantic sphinx, which threatens to precipitate into the abyss of scepticism whoever is unable to solve her dreadful enigma.

COLERIDGE

From Coleridge's *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare:*

I believe the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy. Indeed, that this character must have some connection with the common fundamental laws of our nature may be assumed from the fact that Hamlet has been the darling of every country in which the literature of England has been fostered. In order to understand him, it is essential that we should reflect on the constitution of our own minds. Man is distinguished from the brute animals in proportion as thought prevails over sense; but in the healthy processes of the mind, a balance is constantly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect; for if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action. Now, one of Shakespeare's modes of creating characters is to conceive any one intellectual or moral faculty in morbid excess, and then to place himself, Shakespeare, thus mutilated or diseased, under given circumstances. In Hamlet he seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses and our meditation on the working of our minds, — an *equilibrium* between the real and the imaginary worlds. In Hamlet this balance is disturbed;

his thoughts and the images of his fancy are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his very perceptions, instantly passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and a colour not naturally their own. Hence we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. This character Shakespeare places in circumstances under which it is obliged to act on the spur of the moment. Hamlet is brave and careless of death; but he vacillates from sensibility, and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve. Thus it is that the tragedy presents a direct contrast to that of *Macbeth*: the one proceeds with the utmost slowness, the other with a crowded and breathless rapidity.

ULRICI

From Morrison's translation of Ulrici's *Shakespeares dramatische Kunst*:

Even when Hamlet has assured himself of the King's guilt by the device of the play, he still hesitates, and forms no resolve; he is still beset with doubts and scruples, — but preëminently *moral* doubts and *moral* scruples! Most justly. Even though the King were trebly a fratricide, in a *Christian* sense, it would still be a sin to put him to death with one's own hand, without a trial and without justice. In Hamlet, therefore, we behold the Christian struggling with the natural man, and its demand for revenge in a tone rendered still louder and deeper by the hereditary prejudices of the Teutonic nations. The natural man spurs him on to immediate action, and charges his doubts with cowardice and irresolution; the Christian spirit, — though, indeed, as a feeling rather than as a conviction, — draws him back, though still resisting. He hesitates, and delays, and tortures himself with a vain attempt to reconcile these conflicting impulses and between them to preserve his own liberty of will and action . . . the mind of Hamlet . . . is throughout struggling to retain the mastery which the judgment ought invariably to hold over the will . . . Whenever Hamlet does act, it is not upon the suggestion of his deliberate judgment, but hurried away rather by the heat of passion.

OBJECTIVE THEORIES[1]

ZIEGLER

In 1803 the famous actor Ziegler published a study of Hamlet's character in which was given for the first time an explanation of Hamlet's conduct based upon the nature of the task before him. The following sentences are from Furness's translation:

> If the King's occulted guilt unkennel itself, Hamlet's sword must be plunged in the murderer's heart. If the royal bodyguards do not instantly cut him down, which is to be expected, he will certainly have to justify the assassination of the King before a legally constituted court . . . The issue of the court play in all its frightful proportions is before his soul, — he sees the quick glittering swords of the bodyguard, or else the cold array of judges condemning the slayer of the King.

KLEIN

The following extracts are from A. Cohn's translation of L. Klein's *Berliner Modenspiegel*, 1846, as given in Furness's Variorum *Hamlet:*

> The tragic root of this deepest of all tragedies is secret guilt. Over fratricide, with which history introduces its horrors, there rests here in this drama a heavier and more impenetrable veil than over the primeval crime. There the blood of a brother, murdered without any witness of the deed, visibly streaming, cries to Heaven for vengeance. Here the brother in sleep, far from all witnesses or the possible knowledge of any one, is stolen upon and murdered. . . . The horror of this crime is its security; the horror of this murder is that it murders discovery. . . . This Cain's deed is known to no

[1] A remarkable arraignment of the theories which find the causes of Hamlet's delay "merely, or mainly, or even to any considerable extent, in external difficulties," will be found in Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 94–96.

one but the murderer, and to Him who witnesses the murderer's secret remorse. The son has no other certainty of the unwitnessed murder than the suspicion generated by his ardent filial love, the prophecy of his bleeding heart, "O my prophetic soul!" no other conviction but the inner psychological conviction of his acute mind; no other power of proving it but that which results from the strength of his strong, horror-struck understanding, highly and philosophically cultivated by reflection and education; no other testimony than the voice of his own soul inflamed and penetrated by his filial affection; no other light upon the black crime hidden in the bosom of the murderer than the clear insight of his own soul. Vengeance is impossible, for its aim hovers in an ideal sphere. It falters, it shrinks back from itself, and it must do so, for it lacks the sure basis, the tangible hilt; it lacks what alone can justify it before God and the world, material proof. . . . In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare has illustrated his great historical theorem by modes of proof different from those employed in his other tragedies: that punishment is only guilt developed, the necessary consequence of a guilt voluntarily incurred. . . . The dogma that "Foul deeds will rise, though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes," is proved here with fearful import. By this fundamental idea is *Hamlet* to be explained.

WERDER

The objective theory of Hamlet's delay which has attracted most attention is that advanced by Karl Werder in his essay, *Vorlesungen über Shakespeares Hamlet*, Berlin, 1875. Werder recognizes that there are other difficulties than those that are merely external, but takes the following strong and commanding position in his justly famous argument:

To a tragical revenge there is necessary, punishment, to punishment justice, and to justice the vindication of it before the world. And, therefore, Hamlet's aim is not the crown, nor is it his first duty to kill the King; but his task is justly to punish the murderer of his father, unassailable as that murderer is in the eye of the world, and to satisfy the Danes of the rightousness of this procedure.

. . . It is the difficulty of producing this evidence, this proof, the apparent impossibility of convicting the guilty person, that constitutes the cardinal point in Hamlet! And therefore killing the King *before* the proof is adduced would be, not killing the guilty, but killing the *proof;* it would be, not the murder of the criminal, but the murder of Justice! It would be Truth that would be struck dead, through such an annihilation of its only means of triumph; the tragic action would degenerate into the action of mere brutes; a strange, outrageous, brutal blow, across the clear eyes of the understanding, would be this senseless stroke, — for which the critics are so importunate! . . . Upon the one side, a well-defended fortress, and without, a single man, who is to take it, he alone. So stands Hamlet confronting his task.

GENERAL DISCUSSION [1]

In considering the question of Hamlet's delay to strike the King, it must be remembered that the Ghost's commands (I, v, 25, 84–86) leave the time and manner of revenging the "foul and most unnatural murder" to Hamlet's own judgment, only he must not taint his soul, nor contrive against his mother aught. He might take off Claudius as secretly, and in some such way, as Claudius has taken off his father; but this would be to stain himself with the most abominable guilt and baseness. Whatsoever he does, he must be ready to avow it in the face of all Denmark, and to stand responsible for it. Come what may, he must, he can, use no arts but manly arts. He is placed in a dreadful dilemma. He must punish — it is his most sacred duty to punish — a crime which it is not possible for him

[1] The view of Hamlet's character and the theory of his action here set forth were held by Dr. Hudson before Werder's essay was published, but to that essay the spirit and form of this analysis owe not a little.

to prove, and which must not be punished till it has been proved. His strong, clear head instantly takes in the whole truth of his situation, comprehends at a glance the entire case in all its points and bearings. All this may well fill him, as indeed it does, with the most excruciating and inevitable agony; and while he thus lives in torture, his mighty suffering, even because he is so strong, arouses all his faculties, and permits not a particle of the intellectual man to be lost.

From the time of his interview with the Ghost, all is changed with Hamlet,—all, both without and within; henceforth he lives in quite another world, and is himself quite another man. All his old aims and aspirations are to be sternly renounced and thrust aside: life can have no more joys for him; his whole future must be cast in a new shape. All the duties upon which his thoughts have been hitherto centred are now merged in the one sacred, all-absorbing task enjoined upon him as from heaven itself.

Now so great, so sudden, so agonizing a change within cannot but work some corresponding change without; it will naturally, and even necessarily, register itself in his manner and behavior. While he *is* so different, how is it possible he should *appear* the same? And he himself evidently foresees that this change will cause him to be regarded as beside himself, as out of his right mind, especially as he cannot disclose the reason of it, and must by all means keep the cause of that change, or even any whisper of it, from reaching the King or the court. A behavior so strange, so odd, so unaccountable, must needs appear to others to have sprung from a stroke of madness. All this he clearly forecasts, as indeed he well may, and he desires, apparently, that his action may be so construed: he lets his "antic disposition"

have free course, and rather studies than otherwise to sustain and strengthen by his conduct the imputation of madness. "To this degree," says Werder, "to this degree, which is relatively slight, he makes believe, he plays the madman. But because it is essentially his truth, the effect of his real suffering, of his shattered being, to which his mind gives vent so far as it can without betraying his secret, because it is his torture, his rage, his cry of woe, his agony, thus outwardly expressed, therefore this playing of his is not merely feigning, and because not merely, therefore not feigning at all, in the strict sense of the word."

Hamlet is not indeed master of the situation, but he understands the situation, which is just what some of his critics have not done, and he is not master of it because, as things stand, such mastery is quite beyond the power of any man. The critics in question insist that the one thing which Hamlet ought to do, and which he would do if he had any real backbone of executive energy, is to strike the avenging blow with instant dispatch on the first opportunity. Such an opportunity he has, or can make, at almost any time. But to do thus would be both a crime and a blunder, and a blunder even more than a crime. How shall he justify such a deed to the world? how vindicate himself from the very crime which he must allege against another? For, as he cannot subpœna the Ghost, the evidence on which he is to act is available only in the court of his own conscience. To serve any good end, the deed must so stand to the public eye as it does to his own; else he will be in effect setting an example of murder, not of justice. And the crown will seem to be his real motive, duty but a pretence. Can a man of his "large discourse looking before and after" be expected to act thus?

We, to be sure, long impatiently to have the crowned murderer get his deserts, because the whole truth of his guilt is known to us; but the people of Denmark, Hamlet's social and political world, know nothing of it, and can never be convinced of it should he proceed in that way. For the Ghost's disclosures were made to his ear alone: nobody else heard a word of them; and is it to be supposed that the Ghost's tale will be received on his sole word? that, too, in behalf of an act by which he has cut away the only obstacle between himself and the throne? The very alleging of such grounds will be regarded as, if possible, a worse crime than that in defence of which they are alleged. To the Danish people Hamlet will needs himself appear to be what he charges Claudius with being. Claudius is their lawful king; they are his loyal subjects; they will not suffer their chosen ruler to be assassinated with impunity; they will hold themselves bound to wreak upon Hamlet the very vengeance which he claims to have wreaked upon him. Unless he summons the Ghost into court as a witness, every man will set him down either as a raving maniac, to be held in chains, or else as a monstrous liar and villain, who has murdered at once his uncle, his mother's husband, and his king, and then has trumped up a ghost story in order at the same time to shield himself and to blacken his victim.

Most assuredly, therefore, the deed which the critics in question so loudly call for is the very thing of all others which Hamlet ought not to do, which he must not do; which, moreover, he cannot do, for the simple reason that he is armed with such manifold strength, and is strong in reason, in judgment, in right feeling, in conscience, in circumspection, in prudence, in self-control, as well as in hand, in courage,

in passion, in filial reverence, and in a just abhorrence of the King's guilt. That he does not deal the avenging stroke at once — than which nothing were easier for him, were he not just the strong-willed man that he is; were he a mere roll of explosive, impotent passion, like Laertes — this the critics ascribe, some to constitutional or habitual procrastination, others to an intellectual activity so disproportionate as to quench what little force of will he may have.

Against all this it may be affirmed that, if Hamlet has any one attribute in larger measure than another, it is that very power which these critics accuse him of lacking. They see no strength of will in him, because, while he has this, he has also the other parts of manhood equally strong. Now, the main peculiarity, the most distinctive feature of Hamlet's case is, that, from the inevitable, pressing, exigent circumstances of his position — circumstances quite beyond his mastery, quite beyond all mere human mastery — his strength of will has, and must have, its highest exercise, its supreme outcome, in self-restraint and self-control; an indwelling power laying the strong hand of law upon him, and causing him to respect the clear, consenting counsels of reason, of prudence, of justice and conscience, — counsels which his quick, powerful, well-poised intellect perfectly understands.[1] And the act which these critics require of him, so far from evincing strength of will, would do just the reverse; it would evince nothing but the impotence of a blind, headlong, furious passion, — a transport of rage so violent as to take away all that responsibility which everybody understands to adhere to a truly voluntary act. In other words, it would be an act not so much of executive energy as of destructive fury.

[1] See quotation from Werder given above.

Some critics talk as if it were a matter solely between Hamlet and Claudius, as if the people of Denmark had no concern in the question. Hamlet does not see it so. Every lover of his kind naturally desires, both in life and in death, the good opinion of his kind. This is partly because such opinion is an indispensable condition of his serving them. And so Hamlet has a just, a benevolent, and an honorable concern as to what the world may think of him; he craves, as every good man must crave, to have his name sweet in the mouths, his memory fragrant and precious in the hearts, of his countrymen. How he feels on this point is shown in his dying moments, when he wrenches the cup of poison from Horatio's hand and appeals at once to his strong love and his great sorrow:

> O good Horatio! what a wounded name,
> Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story. [V, ii, 334–339.]

Thus Hamlet's hands are inextricably tied, — tied, not through any defect, nor through any excess, in himself; not through any infirmity of will or courage or resolution, but by the insurmountable difficulties of his situation. It is not that an intellectual impetuosity, or a redundancy of thought, cripples or in any way retards his powers of action, but that the utter impossibility of acting, without covering himself, in all human account, with the guilt of parricide and regicide, prodigiously stimulates and quickens his powers of thought, and keeps his splendid intellect in an incessant transport of exercise. And so the very plan of the drama is to

crush all the intellectual fragrance out of him between a necessity and an impossibility of acting. The tremendous problem, the terrible dilemma which he has to grapple with, is one that Providence alone can solve, as Providence does solve it at the last.

As if on purpose to warn and guard us against imputing Hamlet's delay to the cause alleged, Shakespeare takes care to provide us with ample means for a different judgment; showing him, again and again, to be abundantly energetic and prompt in action whenever the way is clear before him. So it is in his resolution to meet and address the Ghost; in his breaking away from the hands of friendship when the Ghost beckons him to follow; in his devising and executing the scheme for making the King's "occulted guilt unkennel itself"; and especially in his action on shipboard, when he sends the King's agents to the fate they have prepared for himself. In these cases, as in various others, he discovers anything but a defect of active energy; his mental powers range themselves under the leading of a most vigorous and steady will. And his conduct appears, moreover, strictly normal, and not spasmodic or exceptional; it is clearly the result of character, not of disease.

Thus much for the reasons of Hamlet's course, as these are personal to himself; but the dramatist had other reasons of his own, indispensable reasons of art, for not making Hamlet act as the critics would have him. Shakespeare portrays many great criminals, men, and women too, who for a while ride in triumph over virtue wronged, persecuted, crushed; and he always brings them to punishment, so far as this world can punish them; but he never in a single instance does this till their crimes are laid open to the world,

so that all about them recognize the justice of their fate, and are righteously glad at what befalls them. In all this Shakespeare is profoundly, religiously true to the essential order and law of all right tragic representation; for our moral nature, as tuned in sympathy with its Source, reaps a deep, solemn, awful joy from such vindications of the Divine law.

Now the very nature and idea of a proper tragic revenge or retribution require that the guilty be not put to death till their guilt has been proved, and so proved that the killing of them shall be manifestly a righteous act, — shall stand to the heart and conscience of mankind as an act of solemn and awful justice. To such a revenge — the only revenge that Hamlet can execute or ought to execute; the only revenge, too, consistent with the genius of the work — to such a revenge, punishment is necessary; to punishment, justice is necessary; to justice, the vindication of it in the eyes, not merely of the theatre, but of those among whom the action takes place. So that, if Shakespeare had made Hamlet kill Claudius a moment earlier than he does, he would have violated the whole moral law of his art, — that law whose "seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world." And in that case the tragic action, instead of being to the persons concerned in any proper sense a righteous procedure, instead of appealing to their high and sacred sympathies with justice, would be a mere stroke of brutal violence, or at the best an act of low, savage, personal revenge, — such an act as would inevitably array their sympathies with justice against the avenger of crime, and enlist them in behalf of the criminal. Thus the proper music of the work would be utterly untuned, and for the terrible of tragic art would be substituted the horrible of untragic

bungling. This were to write tragedies for the coarse theatrical sense, for the vulgar apprehension of the crowd before the curtain, and not for the inner courts of the human soul!

All through the first two acts of the play, and until late in the second scene of the third act, Hamlet more or less doubts the honesty of the Ghost. The old belief in ghosts held, among other things, that evil spirits sometimes walked abroad, in the likeness of deceased persons, to scare or tempt the living. Hamlet apprehends the possibility of its being so in this case. He therefore craves some direct and decisive confirmation of the Ghost's tale from the King's conscience. When the advent of the Players is announced, he instantly catches at the chance thus offered of testing the question and the possibility, if the Ghost's tale be true, of unmasking Claudius and of forcing or surprising him into a confession. Nothing could evince more sagacity in planning, or more swiftness in executing, than the action he takes in pursuance of this thought:

> I have heard
> That guilty creatures sitting at a play
> Have by the very cunning of the scene
> Been struck so to the soul that presently
> They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
> For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
> With most miraculous organ. I 'll have these players
> Play something like the murder of my father
> Before mine uncle: I 'll observe his looks;
> I 'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
> I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
> May be the devil; and the devil hath power
> T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
> Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
> As he is very potent with such spirits,

> Abuses me to damn me. I 'll have grounds
> More relative than this. The play 's the thing
> Wherein I 'll catch the conscience of the king.
> [II, ii, 575–592.]

The scheme succeeds. The King's behavior in the play fully authenticates to Hamlet, perhaps also to Horatio, the Ghost's tale. Hamlet now knows that Claudius is indeed guilty, and Claudius also, as Hamlet well understands, knows that he knows it. But the evidence thus caught, however assuring to Hamlet, is nowise available for the ends of social or even dramatic justice; the Ghost's tale is still just as impossible to be proved to the mind and heart of Denmark as it was before. But this advantage has been gained, that Claudius must now do one of two things: he must either repent and confess, or else he must try to secure himself by further measures; an attitude merely passive or defensive will no longer do. If he does not repent, there is henceforth a mortal duel between him and Hamlet; one or the other, or both of them, must go down. As Hamlet lives but to avenge the murder, he must neither die himself, nor let the King die, till that work is done.

The result of the play excites Hamlet to the uttermost. His faculties, his sensibilities, are all wrought up to their highest tension. All on fire as he is he may well say, —

> Now could I drink hot blood,
> And do such bitter business as the day
> Would quake to look on. [III, ii, 363–365.]

In this state of mind he comes upon Claudius while in the act of praying. Now he has a fair chance, now in his white-heat of rage, to deal the avenging blow; the self-convicted fratricide is there, alone, before him, and is completely at his

mercy. All through his frame the blood is boiling; still his reason tells him that such a hit will be a fatal miss, and will irretrievably lose him his cause. His judgment, his prudence, his self-control are assailed and pressed by such an overwhelming stress and energy of passion that they are all but forced to give way; so mighty is the impulse of revenge within him that even his iron strength of will can hardly withstand it, and, to brace his judgment against his passion, he has to summon up a counterpoising passion in aid of his judgment. Even his inexpressible hatred of the King is itself called in to help him through the potent temptation, and to keep him from striking the King. This is probably the meaning of the dreadful reasons and motives which he raves out for sparing Claudius. He will take him while in the act of committing such sins as will make sure the perdition of his soul.

Hamlet and his Mother

Now that Hamlet is, beyond all peradventure, certified of the King's guilt, the next thing for him to do is to come to a full and perfect understanding with his mother. He must see her by herself. He must search her breast to the bottom, he must "turn her eyes into her very soul," with his burning eloquence of indignation, of shame, of reproof, of remonstrance, of expostulation; he must arouse the better feelings of the woman and the mother in her heart, and through these, if possible, must redeem her from the blasting curse of her present position; above all, he must know from her directly, either through her words or her manner, whether she was in any way conspirant in the murder of his father, and must also let her know, with an emphasis not to be

resisted, both his opinion of Claudius and how matters are standing between Claudius and himself. While he is on the point of doing this; while, with his soul agitated to its innermost depths, he is talking with her, Polonius on a sudden raises an outcry behind the hangings. Hamlet, supposing the voice to be the King's, is surprised, snatched, swept quite away from himself with a whirlwind gust of passion: instantly, with the speed of lightning, out leaps his sword from the scabbard, as of its own accord, and kills the old intriguer.

The Accomplishment of the Revenge

By this instant lapse of self-control Hamlet has lost his lead in the game and given Claudius a great advantage over him; which advantage, however, Claudius will so use as to open a clear way for the final triumph of Hamlet's cause, though at a fearful cost of life, his own among the rest. Claudius is now to assume the offensive, and is so to carry it as to achieve his own ruin. For indeed his guilt is of such a kind, and is so placed, that it can have its proper retribution only through a process of further development. A dreadful safety indeed! But he will prove far unequal to the sharp exigency in which he will involve himself. Too bad to repent, and too secure in his badness to be reached by human avengement, there is, nevertheless, a Hand which he cannot elude. That Hand is to work his punishment through the springs of his own moral constitution. Hamlet's piercing, unsleeping eye, now sharpened to its keenest edge, is to be upon him, to penetrate his secretest designs, to trace him through his darkest windings, as his evil genius. His guilt is to entangle him, by an inward law, in a series of

diabolical machinations; remorse is to disconcert his judgment, and put him to desperate shifts. Thus his first, most secret, unprovable crime is to goad him on, from within, to perpetrating other crimes, — crimes so open and manifest as to stand in no need of proof; and he is to go out of the world in such a transport of wickedness, lying, poisoning, murdering, that "his heels shall kick at heaven."

Such is the stern, awful, inexorable moral logic of the drama. And its great wisdom lies in nothing more than in the fact, the order, and the method of the hero's being made to serve as the unconscious organ or instrument of the providential retribution. He himself, indeed, is consciously doing the best that can be done in his situation. Meanwhile the Nemesis of the play is working out the result through him, without his knowing it, without his suspecting it. Not till the hand of death is already upon him, does it become possible for him to strike. Now, at length, the seals are opened; now, for the first time, his hands are untied, his passion, his avenging impulse, his will are set free. All this he sees instantly, just as it is; instantly, consciously, he deals the stroke.

Hamlet's Self-Criticism

To turn Hamlet's solitary self-communings, his thinkings-aloud, against himself is hardly fair criticism. Instead of so taking him at his word, we ought to see him better than in his soliloquies of self-disparagement he seems to see himself, and rather, with our calmer and juster vision, to step between him and his self-accusings; to judge him and to maintain his cause upon reasons which he is himself too unselfish, too right-hearted, too noble in mind, to accord their due

weight in his thinkings. This holds especially in regard to his soliloquy beginning, "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" where he surges through a long course of railing and storming at himself, bitterly charging himself with faults and vices of which his whole conduct most certainly and most clearly acquits him. His intolerable anguish, instead of easing itself by blaming, by resenting, by deploring his miserable lot, seeks such relief as it can by arraigning himself before himself. He thus revenges upon himself the inexorable cruelty of his position.

The Pathos of Hamlet's Situation

In his intellectual powers, attainments, resources, Hamlet is highly self-conscious; in his moral instincts, sentiments, principles, in his courage, his honor, his reverence, his tenderness, his sense of truth and right, his human-heartedness, his generosity, his self-restraint, his self-sacrifice, he is nobly unconscious, and rather shows his full, deep possession of them by a modest sense or fear of his being deficient in them, for these things are apt to be most on the tongue where they are least in the heart. Of self-pity, of self-compassion, he discovers not the slightest symptom, and so far from saying or doing anything to stir pity or compassion in others, he is ever trying, though trying spontaneously and unconsciously, to disguise his inward state both from others and from himself; — from himself in high strains of self-accusation; from his true friends in smiles of benevolence, or in fine play of intellect; from his foes and his false friends in caustic, frolicsome banter, and in pointed, stinging remonstrance or reproof. Even when his anguish is shrieking within him, he knits his lips down tight over it, and strangles

the utterance. Hence, in part, the singular vein of pathos that permeates the delineation. That pathos is altogether undemonstrative, silent; a deep undercurrent, hardly ever rising to the surface so as to be directly visible, but kept down by its own weight. Hamlet makes little sign when his suffering is greatest; once or twice only a moan escapes from him, but so low as scarcely to be heard amidst the louder noises of the play, as in what he says to Horatio, near the close, V, ii, 203–207: "Thou wouldst not think how ill all 's here about my heart; but it is no matter . . . It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman."

The Grave-digging Scene

The heterogenous, oddly assorted elements that are brought together in the grave-digging scene, the strange mixture of songs and witticisms and dead men's bones, and the still stranger transitions from the sprightly to the meditative, from the solemn to the playful and the grotesque, make up such a combination as only Shakespeare could conceive. Here we have the hero's profound discourse of thought, his earnest moral reflectiveness, and his most idiomatic humor, all working out together. As illustrating his whole character, in all its depth and complexity, the scene is one of the richest and wisest in the play.

Laertes

Laertes makes a very peculiar and most emphatic contrast to Hamlet. We cannot exactly call Laertes a noble character, yet he has noble elements in him. The respect in which he holds his father, and the entire and unreserved

affection he bears his sister, set him well in our esteem as a son and a brother; beyond these he can hardly be said to show any sentiments or principles worthy of regard. Though incapable of anything so serious as friendship, he is nevertheless a highly companionable fellow. He is never pestered with moral scruples; life has no dark and difficult problems to him; he has no philosophy of life; truth, as such, is neither beautiful nor venerable in his sight; in his heat and stress of destructive impulse, he does not see far enough to apprehend any causes for deliberation or delay. In regard to the death of his father, he snatches eagerly at the conclusion shaped for him by the King, without pausing to consider the grounds of it, or to weigh the merits of the case; and he is reckless alike of means and of consequences, in fact cares nothing for others or even for himself, here or hereafter, so he may quickly ease his breast of the mad rapture with which it is panting. He has a burning resentment of personal wrongs, real or supposed, but no proper sense of justice.

Claudius[1]

With coarse, sensual elements in his nature, Claudius is essentially a strong man. As king he bears himself throughout with dignity; he has a strange power of personal fascination, as the Ghost indicates, and the depth and breadth of his complex being are revealed in the wonderful prayer soliloquy after the play scene. Shrewd and sagacious, quick and fertile of resource, remorseless and unscrupulous, sticking at nothing to gain his ends or to secure himself in what he has

[1] A worthy character study of Claudius is given by Tieck in *Dramaturgische Blätter*.

already gained, he stands forth a man of power, dramatically a great character, formidable from his astuteness, formidable from his unscrupulousness, formidable from the powers and prerogatives with which he is invested as an absolute king. Such as he is, Hamlet knows him thoroughly, understands alike his meanness, his malice, and his cunning, and takes the full measure both of his badness and of his potency.

The Ghost

The Ghost is a powerful element in the drama, shedding into it a peculiar and preternatural grandeur. This power acts through the finest organs of the soul, working so deeply on the moral and imaginative forces that criticism can do but little with it. What an air of dread expectancy waits upon the coming and the motions of that awful shade! How grave and earnest, yet how calm and composed, its speech, as if it came indeed from the other world, and brought the lessons of that world in its mouth! The stately walk, the solemn, slowly measured words, the unearthly cast and temper of the discourse, are all ghostlike. The popular currency of many of the Ghost's sayings shows how profoundly they sink into our souls, and what a weight of ethical meaning attaches to them. Observe, too, how choicely Horatio strikes the key-note of the part, and attempers us to its influences:

> What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
> Together with that fair and warlike form
> In which the majesty of buried Denmark
> Did sometimes march? [I, i, 46–49.]

Nowhere is Shakespeare's power as an artist more conspicuous than in the whole matter preparatory to the Ghost's interview with Hamlet, its first appearance on the scene, its sad

and silent steps, its fading at the crowing of the cock, and the subdued reflections that follow, ending with the speech,

> But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.
> [I, i, 166–167.]

Horatio

Horatio is one of the very noblest and most beautiful of Shakespeare's characters. At all times superbly self-contained and as true as a diamond, he is a most manly soul, full alike of strength, tenderness, and solidity. But he moves so quietly in the drama that his rare traits of character have received scant justice. Much of the best spirit and efficacy of the scenes is owing to his presence. He is the medium whereby some of the hero's finest and noblest qualities are conveyed to us, yet he himself is so clear and transparent that he scarcely catches the attention. The great charm of his unselfishness is that he seems not to be himself in the least aware of it, — "as one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing." His mild scepticism "touching the dreaded sight twice seen of us" is exceedingly graceful and scholarly. And, indeed, all that comes from him marks the presence of a calm, clear head, keeping touch and time perfectly with a good heart.

Polonius

Polonius is Shakespeare's version, sharply individualized, of a politician somewhat past his faculties; shrewd, careful, conceited, meddlesome, and pedantic. "Dotage encroaching upon wisdom" is Samuel Johnson's famous characterization of him. Hamlet does Polonius some injustice, partly as thinking that the old man has wantonly robbed him of his

heart's best object, and not making due allowance, as indeed lovers seldom do in such cases, for the honest though perhaps erring solicitude of a father's love. Therewithal he looks upon him as a supple time-server and ducking observant, which indeed he is, of whoever chances to be in power, ever ready to "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee where thrift may follow fawning."

Polonius has his mind richly stored with prudential and politic wisdom, which, however, shows somewhat absurdly in him, because, to use a figure of Coleridge's, it is like a light in the stern of a ship, that illumines only that part of the course already left behind. Polonius is "knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight." A man of one method, political engineering, with his fingers ever itching to work the machine of policy, and with little perception of times and occasions, he is called to act where such arts and methods are peculiarly unfitting, and so he overreaches himself.

Polonius has great knowledge of the world, though even here his mind has come to rest mainly in generalities. Accordingly the pithy maxims he gives Laertes, to "character in his memory," are capital in their way; nothing could be better; yet they are but the well-seasoned fruits of general experience and reflection, and there is no apparent reason why he should speak them at that time, except that they were strong in his mind. One would suppose that in such an act of paternal blessing he would try to breathe some fire of noble sentiment into his son; whereas he thinks of nothing higher than cold precepts of worldly prudence, which seem indeed to be the essence of religion with him. And he imagines that such thoughts will be a sufficient breakwater against the passions of youth!

Ophelia [1]

The pathetic sweetness of Ophelia "divided from herself and her fair judgment" touches the soul with surpassing delicacy. But the touch is full of power withal. The violence her feelings suffered in the constrained repulse of her lover after she had "suck'd the honey of his music vows"; her tender grief at his subsequent condition, which is all the greater that she thinks herself the cause of it; the shock of her father's sudden and violent death — the father whom she loves with such religious entireness — and this by the hand of that same lover, and in consequence of the madness into which, as she believes, her own action has cast him; — all these causes join in producing her lapse of reason, and all reappear more or less in what she says and sings afterwards. Her insanity is complete, unconscious, and such as, it is said, never ends but with the sufferer's death. There is no method in it; she is like one walking and talking in her sleep, her mind still busy, but its sources of activity all within; she is literally "incapable of her own distress." The verses she sings are fragments of old ballads which she had heard in her childhood, when she understood not the meaning of them, and which had faded from her memory, but are now revived just enough for her inward eye to catch the words. The character of some of them is surpassingly touching, because it tells us, as nothing else could, that she is utterly unconscious of what she is saying. The fine threads of association by which they are now brought to her mind may be felt, but cannot be described. And the sweet, guileless, gentle

[1] For a suggestive and penetrating study of Ophelia see *Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, by Helena Faucit (Lady Martin).

spirit of the poor girl casts a tender sanctity over the whole expression.

Ophelia's situation much resembles Imogen's; their characters are in marked contrast. Both appear amidst the corruptions of a wicked court, and both pass through them unhurt; the one because she knows not of them, the other because she both knows and hates them. And the reason why Ophelia knows not of them is that her simplicity of character makes her susceptive only of that which is simple.

Gertrude

The Queen's affection for Ophelia is one of those unexpected strokes of art, so frequent in Shakespeare, which surprise us into reflection by their naturalness. That Ophelia should disclose a vein of goodness in the Queen was necessary, perhaps, to keep us from misprizing the influence of the one and from exaggerating the wickedness of the other. The love she thus inspires tells us that her helplessness springs from innocence, not from weakness, and so prevents the pity which her condition moves from lessening the respect due to her character.

Almost any other author would have depicted Gertrude without a single alleviating trait. Shakespeare portrays her so as neither to disarm censure nor to preclude pity. She was not a direct accomplice in the murder of her husband; the evidence is strong that she neither knew of the murder nor had any suspicion of it. Dragged along in the terrible train of consequences which her own guilt had a hand in starting, she is hurried away into the same dreadful abyss along with those whom she loves, and against whom she has sinned. In her tenderness towards Hamlet and Ophelia

we recognize the virtues of the mother without in the least overlooking the guilt of the wife, while the crimes in which she is a partner almost disappear in those of which she is the victim.

IX. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of all Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* probably combines the greatest strength and diversity of powers. In Hamlet himself we have little less than the whole science of human nature drawn together and condensed. In other respects the play is well in keeping with this varied profusion of matter in the hero. Sweeping round the whole circle of human thought and passion, in its alternations of amazement and fear, of lust and ambition and remorse, of hope, love, friendship, anguish, madness, and despair, of wit, humor, pathos, poetry, and philosophy, now congealing the blood with terror, now melting the heart with pity, now launching the mind into eternity, now startling conscience from her lonely seat with supernatural visitings, — it unfolds a world of truth and beauty and sublimity.

In view of the moral incongruities here displayed, especially in the catastrophe, Goethe has the following weighty sentence: "It is the tendency of crime to spread its evils over innocence, as it also is of virtue to diffuse its blessings over many who deserve them not; while, frequently, the author of the one or of the other is not punished or rewarded." This aptly suggests the moral scope and significance of the drama. From the appalling discrepancies involved in such a course of administration, there is, there can be, but one refuge. What that refuge is the play does not fail to tell us; and it tells us by the mouth of him who

has most cause to dread what his guilt-burdened conscience forecasts so profoundly:

> In the corrupted currents of this world
> Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
> And oft 't is seen the wicked prize itself
> Buys out the law; but 't is not so above;
> There is no shuffling, there the action lies
> In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd,
> Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
> To give in evidence. [III, iii, 57–64.]

X. STAGE HISTORY

As an acting drama, *Hamlet* is supreme in the English-speaking world; no play has had and continues to have a firmer hold upon the stage. Its history as a play is a history of the most notable performances of the great actors of Britain and America. In the nineteenth century it conquered the stage of Germany, France, Italy, and Russia, when the foremost actors of these countries essayed the rôle of Hamlet the Dane.

The Seventeenth Century

The popularity of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from the first as an acting play is attested by the title-page of the First Quarto (see facsimile, page xxvii). The reference to performances out of London as well as in London is unique in Quarto title-pages. This popularity is further shown by specific references to the play as a play from 1607 to 1624.[1] Richard Burbage (Burbige, Burbadge), the famous member of the company to which Shakespeare belonged, is usually, and on good

[1] For such references, see Ingleby, *Centurie of Prayse*.

evidence, regarded as the first of the long and illustrious line of stage Hamlets. Apart from the tradition referred to in note, V, ii, 277,[1] the nearest contemporary reference to Burbage's acting of the part is in the following memorial verses[2] preserved in Folio MS. in the Huth library:

A Funerall Ellegye on ye Death of the famous Actor Richard Burbedg who dyed on Saturday in Lent the 13 March 1618.

hee 's gone & wth him what A world are dead.
which he reviv'd, to be revived soe,
no more young Hamlett, ould Heironymoe
kind Leer, the Greved Moore, and more beside,
that lived in him; have now for ever dy'de,
oft have I seene him, leap into the Grave
suiting the person wch he seem'd to have
of a sadd Lover with soe true an Eye
that theer I would have sworne, he meant to dye,
oft have I seene him, play this part in ieast,
soe lively, that Spectators, and the rest
of his sad Crew, whilst he but seem'd to bleed,
amazed, thought even then hee dyed in deed.

Two other members of the Globe company in Shakespeare's time, John Lowin and Joseph Taylor, have been mentioned as the first to take the part of Hamlet. The case for Lowin was supported by Schlegel and Payne Collier; the evidence for Taylor is this extract from Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*: "The Tragedy of *Hamlet*, Hamlet being performed by Mr. Betterton: Sir William[3] (having seen Mr. Taylor, of

[1] Though short and stout, Burbage had, if we may trust Overbury, a musical voice and a "full and significant action of body."

[2] For an account of the various versions, see Ingleby, *Shakespeare, the Man and the Book*.

[3] Sir William D'Avenant (Davenant), Poet Laureate from 1638 to 1688.

the Black-Fryars Company, act it; who being instructed by the Author Mr. Shakespear) taught Mr. Betterton in every particle of it." Brereton, in *Some Famous Hamlets*, after investigating the claims made for Lowin and for Taylor, concludes: "There is no record whatever of Lowin having even so much as appeared in the character. Taylor certainly acted Hamlet, but he did so after Burbage." The only other parts in the original *Hamlet* performances to which there is any significant reference are those of the Ghost and the First Gravedigger. Rowe preserves the tradition that Shakespeare himself acted the Ghost, and adds that it was "the top of his performance." The original First Gravedigger is said to have been the famous comic actor Will Kempe (see note, III, ii, 41).

The 'Mr. Betterton' of the quotation from Downes was Thomas Betterton, the great Shakespeare actor of the Restoration. The quotation indicates that D'Avenant was a living link between him and the first interpreters of Hamlet. Betterton had marked physical limitations, but his genius, dignity, and intellectuality enabled him to hold the stage as the foremost actor of his time for more than half a century. Pepys saw him act Hamlet on August 24, 1661,[1] when he "did the Prince's part beyond imagination"; Steele saw him playing the part "with noble ardour" on December 20, 1709.

Betterton seems to have had always well-balanced support. The 'Mistress Saunderson' who played Ophelia in the Restoration days, probably the first woman who took the

[1] Under August 31, 1688, Pepys has another notable entry in his *Diary*: "To the Duke of York's play house, and saw *Hamlet* which we have not seen this year before; and mightily pleased with it, but above all with Betterton, the best part, I believe, that ever man acted."

part,[1] became Mrs. Betterton and continued to play Ophelia with charm and distinction till the close of the century. Barton Booth won reputation as the Ghost, and such were his power and his passion as an actor that he naturally was looked upon as Betterton's successor as a Shakespeare interpreter. Booth rarely (some say, never) played Hamlet, but his wife (Miss Santlow) became a famous Ophelia, and handed on the tradition of the part to Mrs. Theophilus Cibber, "the best Ophelia that ever appeared either before or since," said Tate Wilkinson, emphasizing the way in which she became identified with the part.

The Eighteenth Century

Before Betterton's death in 1710, the Hamlet of Robert Wilks had won considerable reputation in London, and through the first forty years of the eighteenth century Wilks, Mills, Ryan, and Millward were the more distinguished interpreters of the part. In 1718–1719 Quin, one of the best actors of the time, played Claudius to Ryan's Hamlet at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and his impressive interpretation won deserved attention. As a rule the part of Claudius is taken by an inferior actor, and the subtle balance of the play is thus in great measure destroyed. Quin, recognizing the true greatness of the part, established a precedent which has too often been neglected in later stage representations.

The year 1742 is noteworthy in the stage history of the play. On March 15 Dennis Delane, a young Irishman, acted Hamlet at Drury Lane, and was acclaimed as the

[1] "Sir William D'Avenant gave her such an idea of it as he could catch from the boy Ophelias he had seen before the Civil Wars."—Davies.

greatest interpreter since Betterton. That summer David Garrick, over in Ireland, played Hamlet to 'Peg' Woffington's Ophelia, — the part in which she 'came out' at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, in 1734, — and on November 16 he appeared as Hamlet in London. The literary and artistic world recognized him as the greatest Shakespeare actor of the day. In this production of the play, Garrick had worthy support with Delane as the Ghost, 'Kitty' Clive as Ophelia, and Mrs. Pritchard as the Queen. Mrs. Pritchard seems to have done for the part of the Queen what the genius of Quin did for that of the King, and her dignity and pathos made the rôle as important and significant as that of Ophelia herself. Until 1776, when he took farewell of the stage, Garrick remained the foremost interpreter of Hamlet. He had at times formidable rivals in Sheridan, Barry, Holland, Powell, and others, but his truth to life, his passion, and his artistry enabled him to hold his own against all.[1] What makes his success seem the more remarkable is that he played the part throughout in modern French dress, resorted to such stage artifices as a trick chair[2] in the closet scene, and made unwarrantable alterations in the text and the arrangement of the play.[3]

[1] Interesting contemporary glimpses of Garrick's Hamlet will be found in Lichtenberg's *Briefe aus England* (for translation see Furness's Variorum *Hamlet*, II, 269) and Fielding's account of Partridge's visit to the playhouse (*Tom Jones*, XVI, v).

[2] It collapsed with a crash when Hamlet started up at the appearance of the Ghost.

[3] "He cut out the voyage to England, and the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; he omitted the funeral of Ophelia, and all the wisdom of the Prince and the rude jocularity of the gravediggers." — Boaden.

Five nights before Garrick took his leave of the stage he played Richard the Third to the Lady Anne of Sarah (Kemble) Siddons, the first of the great Kemble family to win distinction in Shakespeare interpretation. Seven years later Mrs. Siddons brought her brother, John Philip Kemble, to London, and on September 30, 1783, he appeared as Hamlet at Drury Lane. The playbill announcement that the play would be given as it was originally written by Shakespeare[1] indicated a marked departure from the Garrick precedent and tradition. Kemble's Hamlet was an innovation and a revelation. The actor, a man of noble figure, gave an interpretation that was scholarly and stately throughout. One critic sums up his Hamlet in the two words, "sensible, lonely." Kemble's diction was slow and measured, with a tendency to declamation in the soliloquies. "Too scrupulously graceful," "majestic solemnity," — such were some of the more severe contemporary judgments. The power and the limitations of Kemble are interestingly suggested in Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of the actor as he stands by the open grave with Yorick's skull in his hand. "Perhaps," said Matthew Arnold, after indicating the characteristics of the great modern Hamlets, "John Kemble, in spite of his limitations, was the best Hamlet after all." To this superb Hamlet Mrs. Siddons in 1785 played a worthy Ophelia.[2]

[1] It is somewhat amusing to find that on the opening night Kemble omitted the instructions to the players, "upon the modest principle," says Boaden, his biographer, "that he must first be admitted a master in the faculty before he presumed to censure the faults of others."

[2] Mrs. Siddons seems to have been the first woman to play Hamlet, but she essayed the part only two or three times, and in provincial theatres, never in London.

The Nineteenth Century

During the early years of the nineteenth century the Hamlet of Kemble was without a rival. On March 12, 1814, London saw Edmund Kean appear in the part, and his passionate energy and intense emotional power soon established an interpretation that was original, unconventional, and in every way commanding. Tenderness to Ophelia, devotion to his mother, and reverential regard for his father's memory, were leading 'motives' in Kean's Hamlet, and strongly influenced later interpretations, notably those of Macready, Fechter, Edwin Booth, and Henry Irving.

Hamlet studies by foreign actors have as a rule been sturdily independent of the traditions of the English-speaking world. Among these great foreign interpretations may be mentioned the robust Hamlet of Mounet-Sully in France, the intellectual Hamlet of Devrient in Germany, the romantic Hamlet of Salvini and of Rossi in Italy.

In the nineteenth century productions Ophelia has usually had adequate representation by the best actress available, but the modern stage has yet to see full justice done to the parts of Gertrude and of Claudius. It may be that the Hamlet of the future who will embody both the Werder ideal and "the sweetness, the tenderness, and the gentleness" which Macready recognized as inherent in the character, will have the support of an actor who will interpret the intellectuality, the strength, and the fascination of the King, and that of an actress who will realize the tragic, pathetic possibilities in her for whom the Ghost expresses such tender solicitude and infinite regard, — the mother of Hamlet.

AUTHORITIES

(With the more important abbreviations used in the notes)

Q_1 = First Quarto, 1603.
Q_2 = Second Quarto, 1604.
Q_3 = Third Quarto, 1605.
Q_4 = Fourth Quarto, 1611.
Q_5 = Fifth Quarto (undated).
F_1 = First Folio, 1623.
F_2 = Second Folio, 1632.
Q_6 = Sixth Quarto, 1637.
F_3 = Third Folio, 1664.
Q (1676) = 'Players' Quarto,' 1676.
F_4 = Fourth Folio, 1685.
Ff = all the seventeenth century Folios.
Rowe = Rowe's editions, 1709, 1714.
Pope = Pope's editions, 1723, 1728.
Theobald = Theobald's editions, 1733, 1740.
Hanmer = Hanmer's edition, 1744.
Johnson = Johnson's edition, 1765.
Capell = Capell's edition, 1768.
Malone = Malone's edition, 1790.
Steevens = Steevens's edition, 1793.
Globe = Globe edition (Clark and Wright), 1864.
Tschischwitz = Tschischwitz's edition, 1869.
Clar = Clarendon Press (second) edition (Clark and Wright), 1871.
Dyce = Dyce's (third) edition, 1875.
Furness = H. H. Furness's *A New Variorum. Hamlet*, 1877.
Delius = Delius's (fifth) edition, 1882.
Camb = Cambridge (third) edition (W. A. Wright), 1891.
Dowden = Dowden's Arden edition, Methuen & Co.
Verity = A. W. Verity's edition.
Chambers = Chambers's Warwick edition.
Herford = C. H. Herford's *The Eversley Shakespeare*, 1903.
Abbott = E. A. Abbott's *A Shakespearian Grammar*.
Bradley = A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1904.
Cotgrave = Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*, 1611.
Schmidt = Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon*.
Skeat = Skeat's *An Etymological Dictionary*.
Murray = *A New English Dictionary* (*The Oxford Dictionary*).
Century = *The Century Dictionary*.

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART

Except in the case of Shakespeare's plays (see note) the literature dates refer to first publication

YEAR	SHAKESPEARE: BIOGRAPHY; POEMS	SHAKESPEARE: PLAYS	BRITISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE	HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
1564	Birth. Baptism, April 26, Stratford-on-Avon		Quart livre de Pantagruel	Michelangelo died. Calvin died. Marlowe born. Galileo born
1565	Father became alderman		Sackville and Norton's **Gorboduc** printed	Philip II of Spain gave his name to Philippine Islands
1566	Brother Gilbert born		Udall's **Roister Doister** printed?	Murder of Rizzio
1568	Father, as bailiff of Stratford, entertained Queen's and Earl of Worcester's actors	NOTE. The plays in the columns below are arranged in the probable, though purely conjectural, order of composition. Dates appended to plays are those of first publication. Where no date is given, the play was first published in the First Folio (1623). M signifies that the play was mentioned by Meres in the **Palladis Tamia** (1598)	The Bishops Bible. La Taille's **Saülle Furieux**. R. Grafton's **Chronicle**	Mary of Scots a prisoner in England. Ascham died. Coverdale died. Netherlands War of Liberation
1572			Camoens' **Os Lusiadas** (The Lusiads)	Knox died. Massacre of St. Bartholomew
1573			Tasso's **Aminta**	Ben Jonson born? Donne born
1574	Brother Richard born		**Mirror for Magistrates** (third edition)	Earl of Leicester's players licensed
1575			**Gammer Gurton's Needle**. Golding's Ovid (complete)	Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth. Palissy lectured on Natural History
1576			The Paradise of Dainty Devices. Gascoigne's **Steel Glass**	"The Theatre" opened in Finsbury Fields, London, followed by "The Curtain." Hans Sachs died
1577	Father in financial difficulties		Holinshed's **Chronicle**	Drake sailed to circumnavigate globe

1579	Sister Ann died (aged eight)				Gosson's **School of Abuse.** North's Plutarch. Lyly's **Euphues** (pt. 1). Spenser's **Shepherd's Calendar**	Union of Utrecht. Tasso put in confinement at Ferrara
1580	Brother Edmund born				Montaigne's **Essais** (first edition)	Brown founded Separatists. Camoens died
1581					Tasso's **Gerusalemme Liberata**	Dutch Declaration of Independence
1582	Married Anne Hathaway				The Rheims New Testament	Accademia della Crusca founded
1583	Daughter Susanna born				Garnier's **Les Juives**	Sir Humphrey Gilbert drowned
1584					Lyly's **Campaspe.** Peele's **Arraignment of Paris**	William the Silent assassinated. Ivan the Terrible died
1585	Twin children (Hamnet, Judith) born				Guarini's **Pastor Fido** (1590)	Ronsard died
1586	Probably went to London				Camden's **Britannia**	Sir Philip Sidney killed
1587					Hakluyt's **Four Voyages. Faustbuch** (Spiess, Frankfort)	Execution of Mary of Scots
1588					**Martin Marprelate: The Epistle**	Defeat of Spanish Armada
1589		COMEDIES	HISTORIES	TRAGEDIES	Puttenham's **Art of English Poesie**	Henry of Navarre, King of France. Palissy died in Bastille
1590		**Love's Labour's Lost** (M, 1598)			Marlowe's **Tamburlaine.** Spenser's **Faerie Queene,** I-III. Lodge's **Rosalynde.** Sidney's **Arcadia**	Battle of Ivry
1591		**Comedy of Errors** (M)	**1 Henry VI** **2 Henry VI**		Sidney's **Astrophel and Stella.** Harington's tr. of **Orlando Furioso**	Herrick born

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART (CONTINUED)

YEAR	SHAKESPEARE				BRITISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE	HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
	BIOGRAPHY; POEMS	PLAYS (see note above)				
1592	Greene's attack in Groatsworth of Wit	Two Gentlemen of Verona (M)	Richard III (M, 1597). 3 Henry VI	Romeo and Juliet (M, 1597)	Daniel's Delia. Lyly's Gallathea (Galatea)	Greene died. Montaigne died. London theatres closed through plague
1593	Venus and Adonis (seven editions, 1593–1602)		King John (M). Richard II (M, 1597)	Titus Andronicus (M, 1594)	Peele's Edward I. Barnes's Sonnets	Marlowe died. Herbert born
1594	Lucrece (five editions, 1594–1616)	A Midsummer Night's Dream (M, 1600)			Kinuccini's Dafne. Satire Ménipée	Palestrina ("Princeps Musicæ") died
1595	Valuable contemporary references to Shakespeare	All 's Well that Ends Well. Taming of the Shrew			Peele's Old Wives' Tale. Spenser's Epithalamion	Tasso died. Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition to Guiana. Sir J. Hawkins died
1596	Son Hamnet died. Family applied for coat-of-arms		1 Henry IV (M, 1598). 2 Henry IV (1600)		Drayton's Mortimeriados. Faerie Queene, Books IV–VI	Burbage built Blackfriar's Theatre. Descartes born. Sir F. Drake died
1597	Purchased New Place, Stratford	Merry Wives of Windsor. Merchant of Venice (M, 1600)			Bacon's Essays (first edition). Hall's Virgidemiarum	The Tyrone rebellion
1598	Shakespeare acted in Jonson's Every Man in His Humour	Much Ado About Nothing (1600)	Henry V (1600)		Meres's Palladis Tamia. Chapman's Homer (pt. 1). Lope de Vega's Arcadia	Peele died. Edict of Nantes
1599	Part proprietor of Globe Theatre. Coat of-arms granted. The Passionate Pilgrim	As You Like It			Aleman's Guzman de Alfarache. Peele's David and Bethsabe	Spenser died. Globe Theatre built. Oliver Cromwell born
1600	Won a London lawsuit	Twelfth Night			England's Helicon	Calderon born. Bruno died

1601	Father died. **The Phœnix and Turtle**			Julius Cæsar	Jonson's **Poetaster**	The Essex plot. Rivalry between London adult and boy actors
1602	Purchased more Stratford real estate			Hamlet (1603)	Dekker's **Satiromastix**	Bodleian Library founded
1603	His company acted before the Queen	Troilus and Cressida (1609)			Jonson's **Sejanus**	Queen Elizabeth died. Millenary Petition
1604	Sued Rogers at Stratford	Measure for Measure		Othello	Marlowe's **Faustus** (1588–1589)	Hampton Court Conference
1605	Godfather to William D'Avenant			Macbeth	**Don Quixote** (pt. 1)	Gunpowder plot. Sir Thomas Browne born
1606	**King Lear** given before Court			King Lear (1608)	Chapman's **Monsieur D'Olive**	Lyly died. Corneille born
1607	Daughter Susanna married Dr. Hall			Timon of Athens	Dekker and Webster's **Westward Ho!**	Settlement of Jamestown
1608	Birth of granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall. Death of mother (Mary Arden)	Pericles (1609)		Antony and Cleopatra	Captain John Smith's **A True Relation.** Middleton's **A Mad World**	Milton born. Quebec founded
1609	**Sonnets. A Lover's Complaint**			Coriolanus	The Douai Old Testament	Separatists (Pilgrims) in Leyden
1610	Purchased more real estate	Cymbeline			Strachey's **Wracke and Redemption**	Henry IV (Navarre) assassinated
1611	Subscribed for better highways	**Winter's Tale** **The Tempest**			King James Bible (A.V.). Bellarmine's **Puissance du Pape**	Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden
1613	Invested in London house property. Brother Richard died		**Henry VIII**		Drayton's **Polyolbion**	Globe Theatre burned
1616	Made his will. Daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney. Died April 23 (May 3, New Style)				Captain John Smith's **New England**. Folio edition of Jonson's Poems. D'Aubigné's **Les Tragiques** (1577)	Cervantes died. Beaumont died. Baffin explores Baffin's Bay. Harvey lectured on the circulation of the blood

DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERS

In this analysis are shown the acts and scenes in which the characters (see *Dramatis Personæ*, page 2) appear, with the number of speeches and lines given to each.

NOTE. Parts of lines are counted as whole lines.

		NO. OF SPEECHES	NO. OF LINES
KING	I, ii	7	93
	II, ii	13	36
	III, i	6	40
	III, ii	5	7
	III, iii	4	50
	IV, i	4	34
	IV, iii	14	44
	IV, v	15	65
	IV, vii	18	139
	V, i	3	9
	V, ii	12	27
		101	544
HAMLET	I, ii	33	103
	I, iv	10	67
	I, v	29	99
	II, ii	58	270
	III, i	12	76
	III, ii	59	210
	III, iii	1	21
	III, iv	27	174
	IV, ii	9	20
	IV, iii	10	23
	IV, iv	7	47
	V, i	38	126
	V, ii	58	219
		351	1458
POLONIUS	I, ii	1	4
	I, iii	8	68
	II, i	19	87
	II, ii	40	139
	III, i	4	23
	III, ii	10	13
	III, iii	1	9
	III, iv	3	7
		86	350
HORATIO	I, i	17	101
	I, ii	22	50
	I, iv	13	26
	I, iv	14	14
	III, ii	7	9
	IV, v	1	2
	IV, vi	4	23
	V, i	10	11
	V, ii	26	48
		114	284
LAERTES	I, ii	1	2
	I, iii	7	52
	IV, v	16	48
	IV, vii	17	47
	V, i	6	18
	V, ii	15	35
		62	202
VOLTIMAND	I, ii	1	1
	II, ii	1	21
		2	22
CORNELIUS	I, ii	1	1
		1	1
ROSENCRANTZ	II, ii	24	46
	III, i	5	12
	III, ii	7	15
	III, iii	2	14
	IV, ii	7	9
	IV, iii	3	4
	IV, iv	1	1
		49	101

		NO. OF SPEECHES	NO. OF LINES
GUILDENSTERN	II, ii	12	20
	III, i	2	5
	III, ii	14	23
	III, iii	2	5
	IV, ii	2	2
		32	55
OSRIC	V, ii	25	49
		25	49
GENTLEMAN	IV, v	3	23
		3	23
1 PRIEST	V, i	2	13
		2	13
MARCELLUS	I, i	16	45
	I, ii	6	6
	I, iv	6	8
	I, v	9	9
		37	68
BERNARDO	I, i	19	34
	I, ii	4	4
		23	38
FRANCISCO	I, i	8	10
		8	10
REYNALDO	II, i	13	15
		13	15
1 PLAYER	II, ii	6	48
	III, ii	2	3
		8	51
PROLOGUE	III, ii	1	3
		1	3
PLAYER KING	III, ii	4	44
		4	44
PLAYER QUEEN	III, ii	5	30
		5	30
LUCIANUS	III, ii	1	6
		1	6
1 CLOWN	V, i	33	90
		33	90
2 CLOWN	V, i	12	18
		12	18
FORTINBRAS	IV, iv	2	8
	V, ii	4	19
		6	27
CAPTAIN	IV, iv	7	12
		7	12
1 SAILOR	IV, vi	2	5
		2	5
1 AMBASSADOR	V, ii	1	6
		1	6
LORD	V, ii	3	7
		3	7
SERVANT	IV, vi	1	1
		1	1
MESSENGER	IV, vii	2	5
		2	5
GHOST	I, v	13	89
	III, iv	1	6
		14	95
QUEEN	I, ii	3	10
	II, ii	9	20
	III, i	3	9
	III, ii	3	3
	III, iv	25	47
	IV, i	3	12
	IV, v	11	16
	IV, vii	3	21
	V, i	5	12
	V, ii	4	7
		69	157
OPHELIA	I, iii	10	20
	II, i	5	28
	III, i	13	33
	III, ii	11	18
	IV, v	13	59
		52	158
ALL	I, ii	1	1
	III, ii	1	1
	V, i	1	1
	V, ii	1	1
		4	4
DANES	IV, v	3	3
		3	3

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ[1]

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.
HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present King.
POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.
LAERTES, son to Polonius.
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, ROSENCRANTZ,[2] GUILDENSTERN,[2] OSRIC, A Gentleman, A Priest. } courtiers.
MARCELLUS, BERNARDO,[3] } officers.
FRANCISCO, a soldier.
REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.
Players.
Two Clowns, grave-diggers.
FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.
A Captain.
English Ambassadors.

GERTRUDE,[4] Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.
OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's father.

SCENE: *Elsinore, Denmark.*[5]

[1] DRAMATIS PERSONÆ. Neither Quartos nor Folios give a list of Dramatis Personæ. It was first given by Rowe, and his arrangement has been followed substantially by all later editors.

[2] See note, II, ii, 1.

[3] BERNARDO. In the earlier Quartos and in the Folios the name is spelled 'Barnardo.'

[4] GERTRUDE. In the Quartos the name is occasionally spelled 'Gertrard.'

[5] *Elsinore, Denmark.*] Elsinoor Rowe | Denmark Globe Camb.

ACT I

Scene I. *Elsinore. A platform before the castle*

Francisco *at his post. Enter to him* Bernardo

Bernardo. Who 's there?

Francisco. Nay, answer me; stand, and unfold yourself.

Bernardo. Long live the king!

Francisco. Bernardo?

Bernardo. He.

Francisco. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Bernardo. 'T is now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Francisco. For this relief much thanks; 't is bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

Bernardo. Have you had quiet guard?

Francisco. Not a mouse stirring.

ACT I. Scene I | Actus Primus. Scœna Prima F_1 | Q_2 omits. — *Elsinore* Capell | Q_2Ff omit. — *A platform* . . . Malone | An open Place before the Palace Rowe. — Francisco . . . Bernardo | Enter Barnardo and Francisco, two Centinels Q_2Ff.

1-5. Capell printed as two lines of verse, first ending **unfold.**

6. **carefully** $Q_2F_1F_2$ | chearfully F_3F_4.

1–3. Francisco is the sentinel on guard and ought to be the challenger; hence 'me' in line 2 is emphatic: Answer *me* as I have the right to challenge *you*. Bernardo then gives in answer what is probably the watchword, "Long live the king!" Horatio and Marcellus answer the challenge differently. Bernardo's suppressed excitement is revealed by this irregularity. So the play opens in an atmosphere of agitation and dread. Cf. Francisco's words, line 9.

BERNARDO. Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.
FRANCISCO. I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is there?

Enter HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS

HORATIO. Friends to this ground.
MARCELLUS. And liegemen to the Dane.
FRANCISCO. Give you good night.
MARCELLUS. O, farewell, honest soldier;
Who hath reliev'd you?
FRANCISCO. Bernardo has my place.
Give you good night. [*Exit*]
MARCELLUS. Holla! Bernardo!
BERNARDO. Say,
What, is Horatio there?
HORATIO. A piece of him.
BERNARDO. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.
HORATIO. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

11-13. As in Q_2 | prose in Ff.
14. **ho! Who is** Q_2 | who's Ff.
16. **soldier** Ff | souldiers Q_2.
17. **has my** F_3F_4 | ha's my F_1F_2 | hath my Q_2.
21. HORATIO | Hora. Q_2 | Mar. Q_1Ff.

13. **rivals**: associates, partners. From Lat. *rivalis*, *rivus*. A brook, stream, or river, being a natural boundary between proprietors, was owned by them in common; they were partners in the right and use of it. From the strifes that would naturally ensue, the partners came to be competitors; hence the modern meaning of 'rivals.' The 1603 Quarto (Q_1) reads 'partners' here.

16. **Give you**: God give you. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, ii, 59.

21. The Folios give to Marcellus. — **thing**. Cf. *Coriolanus*, IV, v, 122. There is a temperate skepticism, well befitting a scholar, in

BERNARDO. I have seen nothing.
MARCELLUS. Horatio says 't is but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us;
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes, and speak to it.
HORATIO. Tush, tush, 't will not appear.
BERNARDO. Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.
HORATIO. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.
BERNARDO. Last night of all,
When yond same star that 's westward from the pole
Had made his course t' illume that part of heaven

26-27. **along With us** | along, With us Q_2 | along With vs, Ff. 33. **two nights have** Ff Delius | have two nights Q_2 Globe Clar Camb.

Horatio's words. 'Thing' is the most general and indefinite substantive in the language. Observe the gradual approach to what is more and more definite. 'Dreaded sight' cuts off a large part of the indefiniteness, and 'this apparition' is a further advance to the particular. All is ordered for what Coleridge calls "credibilizing effect."

29. **approve**: corroborate. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, I, i, 60.

33. **What**: with an account of what. See Abbott, § 252.

36. **pole**: pole star. It appears to stand still, while the other stars in its neighborhood seem to revolve around it.

37. **his**: its. 'Its' was just creeping into use at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It does not occur once in the King James version of the Bible as originally printed; it occurs ten times in the First Folio, generally in the form 'it 's.'

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one, —

Enter GHOST

MARCELLUS. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

BERNARDO. In the same figure, like the king that 's dead.

MARCELLUS. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

BERNARDO. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO. Most like; it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BERNARDO. It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS. Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

MARCELLUS. It is offended.

BERNARDO. See, it stalks away!

HORATIO. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

[*Exit* GHOST]

MARCELLUS. 'T is gone, and will not answer.

39. beating F1 towling Q_1
40. *Enter* GHOST Q_2 | Enter the Ghost F1 (after off). Two lines in F1.
44. harrows F_2F_4 horrowes Q_2 | harrowes F_1F_2 | horrors Q_1.
45. Question F1 | Speake to Q_2.

42. It was believed that a supernatural being could only be spoken to with effect by persons of learning, exorcisms being usually practiced by the clergy in Latin. Cf. *Much Ado about Nothing*, II, i, 264.

44. harrows. Cf. I, v, 16; Milton, *Comus*, line 505: "Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear."

45. would be spoke to: wishes to be spoken to. For 'would' see Abbott, § 329; for 'spoke,' § 343. It is an old belief that a ghost cannot speak until it has been spoken to.

49. sometimes: sometime, formerly. Cf. *Henry VIII*, II, iv, 181.

BERNARDO. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale;
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on 't?
HORATIO. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.
MARCELLUS. Is it not like the king?
HORATIO. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on
When he th' ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'T is strange.
MARCELLUS. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.
HORATIO. In what particular thought to work I know not;

61. **he** Q_2 | Ff omit.
63. **sledded** Ff | sleaded Q_2. — **Polacks** Malone | pollax $Q_1Q_2Q_3Q_4$ | Pollax $Q_5F_1F_2Q_6$ | Polax F_3 | Poleaxe F_4 Rowe | Polack Pope.
65. **jump** Q_2 | just Ff.
66. **hath he gone by** Ff | he passed through Q_1.

57. **sensible**: appealing to the senses. — **avouch**: acknowledgment.

62. **angry parle**: conference ending in a fight.

63. **smote the sledded Polacks**: defeated the sledge-using Poles. This is the natural interpretation of this much-disputed expression. The metrical assonance and the use of 'Polack' in II, ii, 75, and IV, iv, 23, strengthen it. The great rival interpretation is: 'brought down (in a sudden fit of anger) his pole-axe weighted with a sledge or hammer at the back (leaded?).'

65. **jump**: just, exactly. Cf. V, ii, 365; *Othello*, II, iii, 392. In *Twelfth Night*, V, i, 259, 'jump' is used as a verb in the sense of 'exactly agree': "do cohere and jump That I am Viola."

67–69. Horatio means that, in his general interpretation of the matter, this foreshadows some great evil or disaster to the state,

But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MARCELLUS. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day?
Who is 't that can inform me?

HORATIO. That can I;
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,

68. **my** Ff | mine Q_2. 73. **why** Ff | with Q_2.

though he cannot conceive in what particular shape the evil is to come. 'Gross and scope' for 'gross scope,' meaning 'general view,' is a good example of hendiadys.

70. **Good now.** "An interjectional expression denoting acquiescence, entreaty, expostulation, or surprise." — Murray. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, V, i, 10. The Quarto of 1603 (Q_1) has a comma after 'Good,' thus connecting 'now' with 'sit down.' Some interpret 'good' here as 'good friends.'

72. **toils**: makes to toil. — **subject**: subjects. Cf. I, ii, 33.

74. **mart**: traffic. Cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, II, i, 329.

75. **impress**: impressment. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, II, i, 107. Tschischwitz reads 'imprest,' meaning 'advance pay.'

77. **toward**: at hand, imminent. Cf. V, ii, 355.

83. Who was spurred on thereto by a spirit of emulation.

Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet —
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him —
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same cov'nant
And carriage of the article design'd,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there

88. **those** Ff | these Q_2.
89. **of** Q_2 | on Ff.
93. **cov'nant** | Cou'nant Ff | co-mart Q_2 | compact Q (1676).
94. **article design'd** $F_2F_3F_4$ | Article designe F_1 | article desseigne Q_2Q_3 | articles deseigne Q_4.
96. **unimproved** | inapproved Q_1.

86. Probably an Alexandrine verse, but see Abbott, § 469.

87. **law and heraldry**. Either (1) 'both civil law and the code of honour established by the court of chivalry,' or (2) by hendiadys, 'the law of heraldry.' Challenges and combats were conducted according to an established code, and heralds had full authority.

89. **seiz'd of**: possessed of. A legal phrase still in use.

90. **moiety competent**: equivalent portion. 'Moiety' (Fr. *moitié*, Lat. *medietas*) means literally 'a half,' but Shakespeare seems to use the word always in the general sense as here.

93. Pronounce 'vanquisher' as a dissyllable and 'by the' as a monosyllable. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, 'co-mart,' the Quarto reading for 'cov'nant,' was adopted in the sense of 'joint bargain.'

94. The import of the document carefully drawn up.

96. **unimproved mettle**: high spirit not hitherto turned to good account. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 159. Some interpret 'unimproved' as 'unchastened'; others, as 'unimpeached.'

Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in 't; which is no other —
As it doth well appear unto our state —
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost: and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

BERNARDO. I think it be no other but e'en so.
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch, so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.

HORATIO. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

98. lawless | lawelesse Q_2 | Landlesse F_1.
101. As Q_2 | And Ff.
103. compulsative Ff | compulsatory Q_2.
108-125. As in Q_2 | Ff omit.

98. **Shark'd up**: gathered indiscriminately as a shark does food. Some interpret 'gathered as a sharker or swindler.' — **lawless**. The Folio reading 'landless' makes good sense here, but seems less appropriate. The idea is that Fortinbras has gathered eagerly, wherever he could, a band of desperadoes, who were up to anything bold and adventurous and required no pay but their keep.

100. **stomach**. Used here in a double sense involving 'appetite for danger' and 'stubborn courage,' as in *Julius Cæsar*, V, i, 66; *Henry V*, IV, iii, 35. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, v, 92.

107. **romage**: rummage. It connotes 'ransacking' and 'turmoil.'

109. **sort**. Either (1) 'happen,' 'fall out,' as in *2 Henry VI*, I, ii, 107; or (2) 'suit,' 'agree,' as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 55: "not sorting with a nuptial ceremony."

The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:
And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omen coming on,

121. fierce Q_5Q_6 | fearce Q_4 | feare Q_2Q_8.

115–120. These prodigies are described by Plutarch. In North's famous version, so much drawn upon by Shakespeare, is the marginal note, "Predictions and foreshews of Cæsar's death." Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I, iii, 9–13, 16–32, etc.

117. The Cambridge editors and many others assume that a line has dropped out here, and hence the grammatical difficulty. There have been many attempts at emendation.

118. **Disasters**: ominous signs. Murray gives as the original meaning of disaster "an unfavourable aspect of a star or planet." This astrological significance, now obsolete, was recognized in Shakespeare's day. — **moist star**: the moon. Cf. "nine changes of the watery star," *The Winter's Tale*, I, ii, 1. The moon is so called either from the dews that attend her shining or, more probably, from her influence upon the tides.

120. **doomsday**: judgment day. Cf. *Matthew*, xxiv, 29: "and the moon shall not give her light."

121. **precurse**: precursor, portent. — **fierce**: terrible. Applied in this way to natural forces, from the fourteenth century onwards. Cf. the modern slang use.

122. **harbingers**. The original sense of 'harbinger' is 'one sent in advance to provide shelter or lodgings for a man of rank.' Cf. *Macbeth*, I, iv, 45. The Middle English form, found in Chaucer, is 'herbergeour' (Old Fr. *herberg-er*). The *u* is intrusive. Cf. 'passenger,' 'messenger.' — **still**: always, continually.

123. **omen**: calamity. The thing itself for that which portends it.

Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Re-enter GHOST

But, soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me;
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me;
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life

126. *Re-enter* . . . | Enter Ghost Qq | Enter Ghost againe Ff.
127. [It spreades his armes] Q2 | Ff omit.
129-130. One line in Ff.
131-132. One line in Ff.
134-135. One line in Ff.

125. **climatures**. Either (1) 'climates,' 'regions,' though the singular, as adopted by Dyce into the text, would seem more natural; or (2) "those who live under the same climate." — Clar.

127. It was believed that a person crossing the path of a spirit became subject to its malign influence. In his *Illustrations of English History*, Lodge, speaking of Ferdinando, Earl of Derby, who died in 1594 by witchcraft, as was supposed, has the following: "On Friday there appeared a tall man, who twice crossed him swiftly; and when the bewitched earl came to the place where he saw this man, he fell sick."

134. **happily foreknowing**: haply foreknowledge; or, less satisfactorily, 'happily,' may be interpreted 'luckily,' 'fortunately.'

136–137. Cf. Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, II, i, 26–27:

> Spirits and ghosts that glide by night
> About the place where treasure hath been hid.

Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
[*The cock crows*]
Speak of it; stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.
MARCELLUS. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?
HORATIO. Do, if it will not stand.
BERNARDO. 'T is here!
HORATIO. 'T is here!
MARCELLUS. 'T is gone! [*Exit* GHOST]
We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.
BERNARDO. It was about to speak when the cock crew.
HORATIO. And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
Th' extravagant and erring spirit hies

138. [*The cock crows*] Q_2 | Ff omit. 140. **at it** Ff | Q_2 omits. 150. **morn** | Morne Q_2 | morning Q_1 | day Ff.

140. **partisan**: halberd, pike. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, i, 80.

150. **trumpet**: trumpeter. Cf. *Henry V*, IV, ii, 61. In *England's Parnassus*, 1600, is "the cocke, the morning's trumpeter."

154. **extravagant**: wandering beyond bounds. Cf. *Othello*, I, i, 137; *Love's Labour 's Lost*, IV, ii, 68. — **erring**: straying. Both 'extravagant' and 'erring' are used strictly in the etymological sense. Words immediately derived from Latin are often used by Shakespeare in a signification peculiarly close to the root notion. Cf. Abbott, Introduction, § 8.

To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

MARCELLUS. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm:
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

HORATIO. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.

158. **say** Q_2 | sayes Ff.
160. **The** Ff | This Q_2.
161. **can walk** Ff Delius 'dare sturre Q_2 | dare stir Globe Camb.
163. **takes** Q_2 | talkes F_1F_2 | talks F_3F_4. — **nor** $F_1F_2F_3$ | no F_4.
164. **hallow'd** $F_1F_2F_3$ | hallowed Q_2 hollow'd F_4. — **the** F_1 that Q_2.

155. **confine**: appointed domain. The belief expressed in lines 150–155, 157–164, was strong in early Christian and mediæval times. In his *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, Douce quotes Latin hymns by Prudentius and by St. Ambrose, of which these passages in the text are virtually paraphrases.

156. **probation**: proof. Cf. *Macbeth*, III, i, 80; *Measure for Measure*, V, i, 157; *Cymbeline*, V, v, 302. Here 'probation' must be pronounced as a quadrisyllable.

161. "The Quarto 'stir' has not the special ghostly significance of 'walk,' which is frequent in Shakespeare." Dowden.

162. **strike**: exert malign influence. Cf. *Coriolanus*, II, ii, 117; *Titus Andronicus*, II, iv, 14. Another astrological allusion.

163. **takes**: blasts, infects, smites with disease. Cf. *King Lear*, II, iv, 166 (adjective); III, iv, 61 (noun). So in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, IV, iv, 30–32, it is told how Herne, the hunter,

> Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,
> Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
> And there he blasts the tree and takes the cattle.

Cf. 'taking,' a provincialism for 'infectious.'

164. **gracious**: blessed, full of grace. Cf. V, ii, 85.

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.
Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

MARCELLUS. Let 's do 't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *A room of state in the castle*

Flourish. Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, *and* Attendants

KING. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom

167. **eastern** Ff | eastward Q_2 Globe Camb.
175. **conveniently** Ff | conuenient Q_2.
A room . . . castle | Ff omit.
Flourish Q_2 | Ff omit. — *Enter* . . . Malone | Enter Claudius King of Denmarke, Gertrude the Queene, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, and his sister Ophelia, Lords Attendant F_1.

166–167. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V, 1–2:

> Now morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
> Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl.

These last three speeches are admirably conceived. The speakers are in a highly kindled state; when the Ghost vanishes, their terror subsides into an inspiration of the finest quality, and their intense excitement, as it passes off, finds expression in a subdued and pious rapture of poetry.

2. **that**. Often used instead of repeating 'though.' 'That' is common in Shakespeare as a conjunctional affix. See Abbott, § 287.

To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Th' imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 't were with a defeated joy, —
With one auspicious and one dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole, —
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows that you know: young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,

8. **sometime** Q_2 | sometimes Ff.
9. **of** Ff | to Q_2.
11. **one . . . one** Ff | an . . . a Q_2.
17. **know: young** Walker coni. | know, young Theobald Camb | knowe young Q_2 | know young Ff.

9. **jointress.** 'Dowager.' — Schmidt. 'Joint-possessor.' — Clar. But may not 'heiress' be the meaning here? If so, Shakespeare follows the history which represents the former king to have come to the throne by marriage, so that whatever of hereditary claim Hamlet has to the crown is in right of his mother.

10. **defeated**: frustrated. Cf. *Othello*, IV, ii, 160. In *Othello*, I, iii, 346, 'defeat' means 'disfigure.'

11. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, V, ii, 80–82. There is an old saying, "To laugh with one eye and to cry with the other."

16. Note the strained, elaborate, and antithetic style of the king's speech thus far. There is more in it than the mere formality which befits a speech from the throne. As he is shamming and playing the hypocrite, he naturally tries how finely he can word his duplicity. In what follows he speaks like a man, his mind moving with simplicity and directness as soon as he comes to plain matters of business.

17. **that**: that which. For omission of relative, see Abbott, § 244.

Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting.
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress
His further gait herein; in that the levies,
The lists, and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope

21. **the** Ff | this Q_2.
24. **bonds** Ff | bands Q_2.
25. *Enter Voltemand (Voltimand* $F_2F_3F_4$*) and Cornelius* Ff.
26. **meeting.** | meeting, Q_2 | meeting: F_4 Camb | meeting $F_1F_2F_3$.
31. **gait** Capell | gate Q_2 Ff.
35. **bearers** Q_2 | bearing Ff.

20. **disjoint.** For interesting examples of the participial *-ed* omitted after *d* and *t*, see Abbott, § 342.

21. 'Colleagued' does not refer to, or agree with, 'Fortinbras,' but with 'supposal,' or rather with the whole sense of the three preceding lines. So that the meaning is, His supposal of our weakness, or of our unsettled condition, united with his expectation of superiority to us.

23. **Importing**: having for import. Abbott interprets 'importuning.'

31. **gait**: proceeding, course, progress. — **in that**: inasmuch as.

37. **To business**: for the purpose of negotiating. See Abbott, § 186.

Of these dilated articles allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS.
VOLTIMAND. } In that and all things will we show our duty

KING. We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS]

And now, Laertes, what 's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; what is 't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice; what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

LAERTES. Dread my lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;

38. **dilated** Ff | delated Q_2. 41. [*Exeunt* . . .] F_4 | Exit . . .] F_1
40. CORNELIUS. VOLTIMAND | Cor. Vo. Q_2 | Volt. Ff. F_2F_3 | Q_2 omits.
50. **Dread my** Ff | My dread Q_2.

38. **dilated**: explained in full, "set out at large." — Herford. The Quartos read 'delate' (the Quarto of 1603, 'relate'), which some interpret as 'conveyed,' 'carried.' — **allow**. The verb is attracted into the plural by the nearest substantive. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, V, i, 33: "The posture of your blows are yet unknown."

44–45. **of reason**: what is reasonable. — **lose your voice**: waste your breath, or your words, i.e. ask in vain.

47–49. **native**: naturally related. The various parts of the body are not more allied, more necessary, to each other than is the king of Denmark bound to your father to do him service.

50. **Dread my lord**: my dread lord. Cf. such Shakespearian inversions as 'good my lord' (*2 Henry IV*, II, i, 69; *The Tempest*, IV, i, 204), 'sweet my mother' (*Romeo and Juliet*, III, v, 200).

From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING. Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

POLONIUS. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent;
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son, —

HAMLET. [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

55, 112. **toward** Q_2 | towards Ff.
57. Two lines in Ff.
58-60. **wrung from . . . hard** **consent** Q_2 | Ff omit.
59. **at last** | at the last Pope.
65. [*Aside*] Theobald | Q_2 Ff omit.

56. pardon: permission to depart. Cf. III, ii, 293.

62–63. Take an auspicious hour, Laertes; be your time your own, and your best virtues guide you in spending of it at your will.

64. From the fourteenth century to the eighteenth 'cousin' was used to describe any collateral relative more distant than a brother or sister. In *Twelfth Night*, I, iii, 5, it means 'niece'; in the same play, III, iv, 68, it means 'uncle'; in *Richard II*, I, iv, it is used in the strict modern sense of 'cousin-german.'

65. It is significant that Hamlet's first line in the play should be an 'Aside' and should contain a play upon words. The king is "a little more than kin" to Hamlet, because in being at once his uncle and his stepfather he is twice kin. He is "less than kind" (pronounced *kinn'd* in Shakespeare's day), for not only has he no affection for Hamlet, but his incestuous marriage, as Hamlet views it, is against 'kind,' or 'nature.' 'Kind' in this sense occurs often in Shakespeare.

KING. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
HAMLET. Not so, my lord; I am too much i' th' sun.
QUEEN. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 't is common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.
HAMLET. Ay, madam, it is common.
QUEEN. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?
HAMLET. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not 'seems.'
'T is not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,

67. so Ff | so much Q_2.
68. nighted Q_2 | nightly Ff.
72. lives Q_2F_1 | live $F_2F_3F_4$.
77. good mother Ft | coold mother Q_2.

67. Hamlet seems to have a twofold, perhaps a threefold, meaning here. First, he intends a sort of antithesis to the king's question; second, as Johnson suggested, he probably alludes to the old proverbial phrase of being 'in the sun,' or 'in the warm sun,' which used to signify the state of being without the charities of home and kindred, — exposed to the social inclemencies of the world. Cf. *King Lear*, II, ii, 168-169. Hamlet regards himself as exiled from these charities, as having lost both father and mother. Again, it is not improbable that he intends a sarcastic quibble between 'sun' and 'son.'

68. **nighted**: dark as night. Cf. *King Lear*, IV, v, 13.

69. **Denmark**: king of Denmark. Cf. 'England,' *King John*, III, iv, 8.

70. **vailed**: cast down. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, I, i, 28: "Vailing her high top lower than her ribs."

72. Cf. *The Tempest*, II, i, 3 6; Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, vi, 2–8.

Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly; these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING. 'T is sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound,
In filial obligation, for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 't is unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,

82. **moods** Ff | modes Q (1695) Capell Delius. — **shows** | shewes F_1F_2 | shews F_3F_4 | shapes $Q_4Q_5Q_6$ Globe Camb | chapes Q_2Q_8.
83. **denote** Ff | deuote Q_2.
85. **passeth** Ff | passes Q_2.
87. Two lines in Ff.
90. **lost, lost** Ff | dead, lost Q_1.
92. **persever** | persevere F_4.
96. **a mind** Ff | or minde Q_2.

82. The 'shows' of the Folios is more satisfactory than the 'shapes' of the Quartos. Hamlet is contrasting the appearance with the reality, and, as Furness points out, the 'show' of line 85 is an intentional and emphatic repetition of the 'shows' of this line.

92. **obsequious**: "dutiful in performing funeral obsequies or manifesting regard for the dead." — Murray. Cf. *Titus Andronicus*, V, iii, 152. — **persever**. In Shakespeare always accented on the penult. So in *Macbeth*, IV, iii, 93, *Troilus and Cressida*, III, iii, 150, 'perseverance' is accented on the second syllable.

95. **incorrect**: unchastened, undisciplined, contumacious.

Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 't is a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd; whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father; for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne,
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,

107. unprevailing: unavailing (Hanmer's suggested emendation).

109. As the throne of Denmark was elective (V, ii, 65), Professor Griffin suggests that this is a sop thrown to Hamlet to soothe his wounded feelings.

110. nobility of love: a distinguished degree of love.

112. Do I impart toward you. The construction here is confused, 'impart' having no object. Dowden suggests that it may be a case of the absorption of 'it' by the *t* of 'impart.' Johnson took 'impart' as used intransitively in the sense of 'impart myself.' Badham, reading 'nobility, no less of love' in line 110, secured a definite object to 'impart,' but with this reading 'nobility' would have to be understood as meaning the honor of being heir presumptive. Most probably, as Delius suggests, 'no less nobility of love' is the true object, the 'with' being forgotten before the main verb is introduced.

113. school in Wittenberg. Luther had made the 'High School,' or University, of Wittenberg, famous all over Europe. 'Fair Wertenberg' is the scene of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, and is mentioned more than once in Elizabethan literature as an important foreign school of learning, one to which students might go at any age to pursue high study. As Wittenberg University was founded in 1502,

It is most retrograde to our desire;
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING. Why, 't is a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Flourish. Exeunt all but* HAMLET]

HAMLET. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,

119. **pray thee** Q_2 | prythee F_1. 128. [*Flourish . . .*] Q_2 | *Exeunt.* Hamlet manet Ff. 129. Scene III Pope. — **too too** Ff | too-too Pope | too, too Jennens. — **solid** Ff | sallied Q_2 | sullied Anon conj.

there is a characteristic Shakespearian anachronism, although dramatic fitness, in mentioning it here. Cf. the use of 'school' for 'university,' to which those of mature years might go, in *As You Like It*, I, i, 6: "My brother Jaques he keeps at school."

114. **retrograde**: contrary. Originally an astrological term, and used as such in *All 's Well that Ends Well*, I, i, 212.

127. **rouse**: deep draught, a beaker drunk to one's health. Cf. *Othello*, II, iii, 66. — **bruit again**: echo, reverberate. Cf. *Macbeth*, V, vii, 22. See Skeat and also Murray for interesting theories as to the etymology of 'bruit.'

129. 'Too too,' as in the text, is more emphatic, by intensive reduplication, than Pope's 'too-too.' — **solid**. Furnivall defends the 'sallied' of the Quartos, interpreting it as 'violently assailed.'

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on 't! O fie! 't is an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother

132. **O God! O God!** Ff | O God, God Q_2. 134. **Seem** | Seeme Q_2 | Seemes F_1 F_2 | Seems F_3F_4. 135. **O fie!** | ah fie Q_2 | Oh fie, fie F_1.

130. **resolve**: dissolve. The three words 'melt,' 'thaw,' and 'resolve,' all signifying the same thing, have a strangely impressive effect.

132. Cf. *Cymbeline*, III, iv, 77–80:

> Against self-slaughter
> There is a prohibition so divine
> That cravens my weak hand.

"Unless it be the sixth commandment, the 'canon' must be one of natural religion." — Bishop Wordsworth, *Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible*.

137. **merely**: completely, wholly. Cf. *The Tempest*, I, i, 59; *As You Like It*, III, ii, 420. So 'mere' (Lat. *merus*, 'pure,' 'unmixed,' 'unqualified') in the sense of 'absolute' in *The Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 265; *Othello*, II, ii, 3. Hamlet's brooding melancholy leads him to take a morbid pleasure in making things worse than they are.

140. For a suggestive note on the scansion of this line see Abbott, § 501. — **Hyperion**. In Greek and Latin the accent is on the penult; in Spenser, Shakespeare, Gray, and Keats, on the antepenult. Hyperion was a Titan, son of Uranus and Gæa, and father of Helios, the sun god, Selene, and Eos. Homer (*Odyssey*, I, 8) uses the name as a patronymic for Helios himself, who was always represented as a strong and beautiful youth, with heavy, waving curls (III, iv, 56).

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month —
Let me not think on 't — Frailty, thy name is woman! —
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears, — why, she, even she —
O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer — married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month;
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears

141. **beteem** | beteeme Q_2 | beteene F_1F_2 | beteen F_3 | between F_4. 150. **O God** Q_2 | O Heauen Ff. 151. **my** Q_2 Globe Delius | mine Ff.

It was not until later times that he was identified with Apollo. Shakespeare mentions 'Hyperion' six times, 'Apollo' twenty-three times. — **to**: by the side of, in comparison with. Cf. I, v, 52; III, i, 52.

141. **beteem**: permit. A rare use of the word. Cf. Golding, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (published 1587):

> Yet could he not beteeme
> The shape of anie other bird then egle for to seeme.

147. **or ere**. 'Or' here is an old form of 'ere' (cf. 'Or ever,' line 183), and the reduplication is similar to that in 'and if' (usually printed 'an if'). For a discussion of the conjecture that 'ere' is a corruption of 'e'er,' see Abbott, § 131.

149. Niobe's children were slain by Apollo and Artemis, and Jupiter transformed the weeping mother into a rock on Mount Sipylus in Lydia.

150. **discourse of reason**: discursive reason, reasoning power. In old philosophical language, 'the faculty of pursuing a train of thought, or of passing from thought to thought in the way of inference and conclusion.'

Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, *and* BERNARDO

HORATIO. Hail to your lordship!

HAMLET. I am glad to see you well: Horatio, — or I do forget myself.

HORATIO. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAMLET. Sir, my good friend; I 'll change that name with you:

155. **in** Q_2 Globe Delius | of Ff.
159. **break my** $Q_2F_1F_2F_3$ | break, my F_4 Globe Delius.
160. Scene IV Pope. — MARCELLUS, *and* BERNARDO Q_2 | Barnard, and Marcellus Ff.
161. **Horatio,** — Theobald | Horatio, Ff.

155. **flushing**: redness. But Clar suggests that the verb 'flush' may here be used in the sense of 'fill with water.' — **galled**. Cf. *Richard III*, IV, iv, 53; *Troilus and Cressida*, V, iii, 55; 'eye-offending brine,' *Twelfth Night*, I, i, 30.

157. **dexterity**: adroitness. S. Walker suggested reading 'celerity,' but 'dexterity' in Elizabethan literature often implies sharp practice. Clar interprets 'dexterity' here as synonymous with 'celerity.' In *1 Henry IV*, II, iv, 286, occurs 'quick dexterity.'

159. **break**. "A subjunctive, not an imperative, and 'heart' is a subject, not a vocative." - Corson. So the punctuation of the First Folio would indicate; but Globe, Clar, Delius, and Camb follow the punctuation of the Fourth Folio.

160. "I am glad to see you well" is a conventional greeting. Hamlet is preoccupied and does not at first recognize Horatio.

163. Hamlet's unfailing and ever graceful courtesy is one of his characteristics. This line may be paraphrased, No, not my poor servant; we are friends; that is the style I will exchange with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio? —
Marcellus?

MARCELLUS. My good lord —

HAMLET. I am very glad to see you. [*To* BERNARDO] Good even, sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HORATIO. A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAMLET. I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself; I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We 'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HORATIO. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAMLET. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

HORATIO. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

166. **lord** — Rowe Globe Delius | lord. Q_2Ff | lord? Camb.
170. **hear** Q_2 | haue Ff.
171. **mine** Ff | my Q_2.
172. **make** F_1 | take $F_2F_3F_4$.
175. **to drink deep** Ff | for to drinke Q_2.
177. **I pray thee** F_1 | I prythee F_2 | I prithee F_3F_4 | I prethee Q_2.
178. **see** Ff | Q_2 omits.

164. **make**: do. Cf. II, ii, 266. Shakespeare puns on the two senses of the word, ringing the changes on 'make' and 'mar' in *As You Like It*, I, i, 31–32; *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, iii, 190–192; *Richard III*, I, iii, 164–165.

167. The words, 'Good even, sir,' are evidently addressed to Bernardo, whom Hamlet has not before known; but as he now meets him in company with old acquaintances, like the true gentleman that he is, he gives him a salutation of kindness. Marcellus has said before of Hamlet, "I this morning know where we shall find him." But 'good even' was the common salutation after noon.

171. For the use of 'that' for 'such' and the omission of 'as' see Abbott, § 277. Cf. I, v, 48.

HAMLET. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd-meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father, — methinks I see my father.
HORATIO. O where, my lord?
HAMLET. In my mind's eye, Horatio.
HORATIO. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.
HAMLET. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.
HORATIO. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
HAMLET. Saw? who?
HORATIO. My lord, the king your father.

183. Or ever I had Q2 | Ere I had euer Ff | Ere ever I had Q1.
185. O where Ff | Where Q2.
190. Saw? who? Ff, Saw, who Q2.

180. **funeral bak'd-meats**. 'Bakt-meats' is the Folio spelling. 'Bake-meat' or 'bakemeat' (cf. *Genesis*, xl, 17) is an old name for 'pastry' or 'a pie.' Scott in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, Chapter II, and elsewhere, has made the readers of romance familiar with the custom of 'funeral bak'd-meats,' which is still common in provincial districts of England and Scotland.

182. **dearest**: intensest, most heartfelt. 'Dear' is used by Elizabethan writers to describe a person or a thing that affects deeply either for joy or pain. Cf. 'hated his father dearly,' *As You Like It*, I, iii, 34–35; 'dear offence,' *King John*, I, i, 257; 'dear offences,' *Henry V*, II, ii, 181; 'dear exile,' *Richard II*, I, iii, 151; 'dear causes,' *Macbeth*, V, ii, 3. Murray derives 'dear' in the sense of 'giving pain' from Anglo Saxon *déor*, 'hard,' 'grievous,' and 'dear' in the modern sense from Anglo Saxon *déore*, 'precious.'

186. **I saw him once**. Perhaps this should be punctuated with a dash after 'him.' Horatio is probably about to say 'yesternight' (line 189) and blurts out 'once.' Cf. I, i, 60–63.

187. Edwin Booth used to pause after 'man,' indicating, as Dowden says, that 'man' was something higher than 'king.'

HAMLET. The king my father!

HORATIO. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

HAMLET. For God's love, let me hear.

HORATIO. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,

193. **attent** $Q_2F_1F_2$ | attentiue Q_1 F_3F_4.
195. **God's** | Gods Q_2 | Heauens Ff.
198. **vast** $Q_1Q_5Q_6$ Globe Camb | wast Q_2F_1 | waste $F_2F_3F_4$ Delius | waist Malone Steevens.
200. **Armed at point** Globe Delius Camb | Armed at poynt Q_2 | Arm'd at all points Ff. — **cap-a-pe** | Cap a Pe Ff | Capapea Q_2.
202. **stately by them**; Q_2 | stately; By them Ff.
204. **distill'd** Q_2 | bestil'd F_1 | bestill'd F_2 | be still'd F_3F_4.

192. **Season your admiration**: modify your astonishment.

198. **vast**: vacancy, void. Cf. 'vast of night,' *The Tempest*, I, ii, 327. The 'waste' of the Folios has the same meaning.

200. **Armed at point**. Cf. 'at all points' in *Richard II*, I, iii, 2. — **cap-a-pe**: "from head to foot" (line 227). From Old Fr. *cap a pie*; mod. Fr. *de pied en cap*.

204. **distill'd**: melted. 'Distil' means originally 'fall in drops,' so that the figure is a natural one to describe the cold sweat of intense fear. Corson prefers the reading of the First Folio, taking 'bestil'd' as a strong form of 'still'd.' The Collier MS. reads 'bechilled.'

205. **jelly**. Connotes trembling and lack of power. — **with**: by. See Abbott, § 193. — **act**: action, or perhaps 'effect.'

Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did:
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes. I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

HAMLET. But where was this?

MARCELLUS. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAMLET. Did you not speak to it?

HORATIO. My lord, I did;
But answer made it none; yet once methought
It lifted up it head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak:
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

HAMLET. 'T is very strange.

HORATIO. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 't is true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

HAMLET. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

209. **Where, as** Q_6 | Whereas Q_2F_1. 216. **it head** $Q_2F_1F_2$ Globe Camb | its head F_3F_4 Delius | his Q_1 Staunton. 221. **honour'd** | honourd F_1 | honourable F_2F_4 | honorable F_3. 224. **Indeed, indeed** | Indeede Q_2.

214. Steevens said that the emphasis should be on 'speak.' The tendency of modern actors is to emphasize 'you.'

216. **it head**: its head. 'It' as a form of the neuter possessive is not uncommon in sixteenth and early seventeenth century literature. See Abbott, § 228, and cf. note on I, i, 37.

218. **even**: just, exactly. See Abbott, § 38.

MARCELLUS. BERNARDO. We do, my lord.

HAMLET. Arm'd, say you?

MARCELLUS. BERNARDO. Arm'd, my lord.

HAMLET. From top to toe?

MARCELLUS. BERNARDO. My lord, from head to foot.

HAMLET. Then saw you not his face?

HORATIO. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

HAMLET. What, look'd he frowningly?

HORATIO. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

HAMLET. Pale, or red?

HORATIO. Nay, very pale.

HAMLET. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HORATIO. Most constantly.

HAMLET. I would I had been there.

HORATIO. It would have much amaz'd you.

HAMLET. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

HORATIO. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

MARCELLUS. BERNARDO. Longer, longer.

228. face? Ff | face. Q_2. lookt he Ff | What lookt he Q_2 | 230. What, look'd he | What, How look'd he, Q_1 Staunton.

226. 'Arm'd' has reference to the Ghost.

228. The Quarto punctuation without the interrogation mark has been held to give a finer interpretation as expressing disappointed expectation.

229. **beaver**: visor of a helmet. Properly the lower part of the helmet face guard. From Old Fr. *bavière*, 'a child's bib.'

237. **tell**: count. Cf. *Psalms*, cxlvii, 4. So 'tale,' meaning 'number.'

HORATIO. Not when I saw 't.

HAMLET. His beard was grizzled? no?

HORATIO. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

HAMLET. I will watch to-night;
Perchance 't will walk again.

HORATIO. I warrant you it will.

HAMLET. If it assume my noble father's person,
I 'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:
I will requite your loves. So, fare ye well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I 'll visit you.

ALL. Our duty to your honour.

HAMLET. Your love, as mine to you; farewell.

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, *and* BERNARDO]

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;

239. **grizzled? no?** | grissl'd, no Q_2 | grisly? no. F_1 | grisly? $F_2F_3F_4$ | grizzled, — no? Dyce.
241-242. **I . . . again** | one line in Ff.
242. **warrant you** Ff | warrant Q_1 | warn't Q_2.
247. **tenable** Q_2 | treble F_1F_4 | trebble F_2F_3.
250. **ye** Ff | you Q_2.
253. **love** | loue Ff | loves Q_2. — [*Exeunt . . .*] Capell | Exeunt (after line 252) Ff.

241. **A sable silver'd.** Cf. *Sonnets*, XII, 4.

247. **tenable**: retained. For adjectives ending in *ble* that have both an active and a passive meaning, see Abbott, § 3. The Folio reading 'treble' has been defended as meaning a threefold obligation to silence. "The actor in uttering it must point to each of the three witnesses." — George Macdonald.

I doubt some foul play: would the night were come! 255
Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. [*Exit*]

SCENE III. *A room in* POLONIUS'S *house*

Enter LAERTES *and* OPHELIA

LAERTES. My necessaries are embark'd; farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

OPHELIA. Do you doubt that?

LAERTES. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour, 5
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,

256. **Foul** Ff | fonde Q_2.
257. **them, to** Pope | them to Ff.
SCENE III | Scene V Pope. — *A room . . . house* | Ff omit.
5. **favour** Q_2 | fauours Ff.
8. **Forward** $Q_2F_3F_4$ | Froward F_1F_2. — **sweet, not** | sweet not Ff | tho' sweet, not Rowe.

255. **doubt**: suspect, fear. Still used thus colloquially.

SCENE III. "This scene must be regarded as one of Shakespeare's lyric movements in the play, and the skill with which it is interwoven with the dramatic parts is peculiarly an excellence with our poet. You experience the sensation of a pause, without the sense of a stop." — Coleridge.

2. **as**: as soon as, according as. See Abbott, § 109.

3. **convoy is assistant**: means of conveyance are ready.

6. **fashion**: transient whim. — **toy in blood**: capricious impulse. With 'toy' cf. I, iv, 75; with 'blood,' line 116; III, ii, 64.

7. **primy**: in spring. Cf. 'prime,' *As You Like It*, V, iii, 33.

8. Metrically, 'sweet' demands a strong pause after it. Cf. pronunciation of 'meet' in *Macbeth*, I, i, 7.

The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
No more.

OPHELIA. No more but so?

LAERTES. Think it no more; 10
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now;
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch 15
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth.
He may not, as unvalu'd persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends 20
The safety and health of this whole state;

9. perfume and Q_2 | Ff omit.
10. so? Rowe | so. Q_2Ff.
18. Q_2 omits this line.
21. safety Q_4Q_6 | safty Q_2 | sanctity Ff | sanity Hanmer (Theobald conj.). — this Q_2 | the Ff.

9. **suppliance of a minute**: mere pastime, to fill up the time.

10. As Ophelia does not seem to question but quietly submits, Corson suggests retaining the punctuation of Quartos and Folios. — **Think it no more**: take for granted that such is the case till you have clear proof to the contrary.

11. **crescent**: growing. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, i, 10, the adjective is used thus with a distinct allusion to the moon.

12. **thews**: sinews, physical strength. — **temple**. This figure, from *2 Corinthians*, vi, 16 (cf. *John*, ii, 21), occurs also in *Macbeth*, II, iii, 73. It is continued in the 'service' of the next line.

13 14. The idea seems to be that Hamlet's love is but a youthful fancy, which, as his mind comes to maturity, he will outgrow. The passage would seem to imply that the prince is not so old as he is elsewhere represented to be.

15. **cautel**: deceit, duplicity. Cf. 'cautelous,' *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 129.

18. **his birth**: the conditions his birth entails upon him.

And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then, if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes;
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd;

26. **particular act and place** Q_2 | peculiar Sect and force Ff.
31. **lose** $F_1F_2F_3$ | loose Q_2F_4.
34. **keep you in** Q_2 | keepe within Ff.
40. **their** Q_2 | the Ff.

22–24. His choice of a wife must be limited by the vote and consent of the whole nation.

26. **particular act and place**: action dependent on his peculiar position. The Folio reading has many defenders.

28. **withal**. The emphatic form of 'with.' See Abbott, § 196.

36. **The chariest**. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare 'Th' unchariest' was the reading adopted.

39. Shakespeare uses 'canker' in the three senses of (1) 'canker-worm,' as here; (2) 'spreading sore,' as in *King John*, V, ii, 14; (3) 'dog-rose,' as in *1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 176.

40. **buttons**: buds. Cf. Fr. *bouton*. — **disclos'd**: opened.

And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary, then; best safety lies in fear:
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPHELIA. I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.

LAERTES. O, fear me not.

Enter POLONIUS

I stay too long; but here my father comes.
A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POLONIUS. Yet here, Laertes? aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!
[*Laying his hand on* LAERTES'S *head*]

46. **watchman** Q2|watchmen Ff. 52. Scene VI Pope. — *Enter* POLONIUS Ff | after **rede** (line 51) in Q2 | after **comes** in Capell Globe Delius. 57. **for. There**; Theobald | for there: Ff. — **thee** Q2 | you Ff. — [*Laying . . . head*] Theobald Ff omit.

47. **ungracious**: graceless. Cf. *Richard II*, II, iii, 89.

50. **primrose path**. Cf. 'primrose way,' *Macbeth*, II, iii, 21; 'flowery way,' *All's Well that Ends Well*, IV, v, 56. — **treads**. For change of construction, see Abbott, § 415.

51. **recks not his own rede**: heeds not his own counsel. Cf. Burns's *Epistle to a Young Friend*:

> And may ye better reck the rede
> Than ever did th' adviser!

And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear 't that th' opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France of the best rank and station

59. See Ff Globe Delius | Look Q_2 Camb.
62. The Ff Delius | Those Q_2 Globe Camb.
63. to Q_1Ff | vnto Q_2.
65. new-hatch'd | new hatcht Q_2 | vnhatch't Ff.
68. thine Ff | thy Q_2.

58. Rushton, in *Shakespeare's Euphuism*, has pointed out that many of the maxims of Polonius are in Lyly's *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, 1579, and *Euphues and his England*, 1580. In the First Quarto many of the 'wise saws' are in quotation marks.

59. **character**: inscribe. Accented here on the second syllable.

60. **unproportion'd**: unfitting. — **his**: its. See note, I, i, 37.

61. **familiar**: courteous, friendly. — **vulgar**: common, 'cheap.'

63. **hoops**. Pope substituted 'hooks,' but "grappling with hooks is the act of an enemy and not of a friend." — Clar.

64–65. Do not blunt thy feeling by taking every new acquaintance by the hand and admitting him to the intimacy of friendship. — **comrade**. Accented on final syllable. This pronunciation is also found in Milton. In *King Lear*, II, iv, 213, the accent is on the first syllable.

69. **censure**: expressed opinion, not necessarily unfavorable.

Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

LAERTES. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POLONIUS. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

74. chief] chiefe Q_2 | cheff Ff. 76. loan F_3F_4 | Loane F_2 | lone F_1 | loue Q_2. — loses Ff | looses Q_2.
75. lender be Ff | lender boy Q_2.

74. A famous crux. With the substitution of 'chief' for 'cheff' the reading is that of the Folios, and adopted in Globe, Camb, and Clar. Here 'chief' is interpreted as a noun meaning 'eminence.' See Murray. The more important of the many variant readings are:

Are of a most select and generall chiefe in that: (First Quarto).
Or of a most select and generous, chiefe in that: (Second Quarto).
Are most select and generous, chief in that. (Rowe, Delius).
Are most select and generous in that. (Grant White).

77. **husbandry**: economy. Cf. *Macbeth*, II, i, 4.

78–80. There is Shakespearian irony in making this old Mr. Worldly-wiseman utter a truth so noble and profound which he only understands as a practical rule of wise selfishness. In the same general sense "honesty is the best policy"; but no truly honest man ever acts on that principle, and a man who fixes upon no higher rule than that of being true to himself will never be really true to himself. This is one of the cases wherein a man must aim at the greater, or he will not attain the less. A man will never be really true to himself unless he be true to something higher than himself.

81. **season**: temper, make fit for the purpose. Cf. III, iii, 86; *The Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 107. "Mature, ripen." — Schmidt. Perhaps we should interpret in the sense of 'ingrain,' the idea being of so steeping the counsel into his mind that it will not fade out.

83. **tend**: are waiting for you. Cf. IV, iii, 44.

LAERTES. Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
What I have said to you.
OPHELIA. 'T is in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.
LAERTES. Farewell. [*Exit*]
POLONIUS. What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?
OPHELIA. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.
POLONIUS. Marry, well bethought.
'T is told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
If it be so — as so 't is put on me,
And that in way of caution — I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.
OPHELIA. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.
POLONIUS. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his — tenders, as you call them?
OPHELIA. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.
POLONIUS. Marry, I 'll teach you; think yourself a baby,

90. **Marry**. This petty oath, from the custom of swearing by the Virgin Mary, was often used as a colloquial intensive.

94. **put on**: told impressively. Cf. *As You Like It*, I, ii, 99–100:

CELIA. . . . Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.
ROSALIND. With his mouth full of news.
CELIA. Which he will put on us, as pigeons feed their young.

102. **Unsifted**: untried. Cf. 'sift' in 'sift the thing thoroughly.'

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus — you 'll tender me a fool.

OPHELIA. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love
In honourable fashion.

POLONIUS. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

OPHELIA. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POLONIUS. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time, daughter,
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate

106. these Q_2 | his Ff.
109. Running Dyce (Collier conj.) Globe Delius Camb | Wrong Q_2 | Roaming Ff.
113-114. my . . . heaven | one line in Ff. — almost . . . holy Q_2 | all the Ff.
117. Lends Q_2 | Giues Ff.
120. From Q_2. For Ff. — daughter Ff | Q_2 Globe Delius Camb omit.
121. somewhat Ff | something Q_2.

106. **tenders.** Polonius puns on two well-known senses: (1) 'offers,' and (2) the business or financial sense preserved in 'legal tender.' In line 107, 'tender' means 'regard,' 'take care of'; in line 109, 'give.'

112. **go to.** A phrase of varying import, "to express disapprobation, remonstrance, protest, or derisive incredulity." — Murray.

115. **springes to catch woodcocks:** snares to entrap simplicity. There is evidence that the expression was proverbial. Cf. V, ii, 296. It was a popular notion that the woodcock had no brains.

122. 'Entreatment' as used here is defined by Murray as 'conversation, interview,' but Murray's first quotation shows that the word was used as a military term in the sense of 'negotiations for peace,

Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,
Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,
The better to beguile. This is for all;
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
Have you so slander any moment leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to 't, I charge you; come your ways.

OPHELIA. I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt*]

128. **that dye** Q_2 | the eye Ff. 130. **bonds** Q_2Ff | bawds Pope (Theobald conj.) Globe Delius Camb. 133. **slander** | squander Collier MS. — **moment** Q_2Q_8Ff | moments $Q_4Q_5Q_6$ | moment's Pope.

surrender,' etc., and this, in view of 'command to parley' in the next line, is undoubtedly the meaning here.

126. **In few**: in short. Cf. *The Tempest*, I, ii, 144. "Adjectives are frequently used for Nouns, even in the singular." — Abbott, § 5. Cf. II, ii, 425: "'T was caviare to the general."

127. **brokers**: go-betweens, petty middlemen.

128. **dye**. The Folio reading may be correct. As in *The Tempest*, II, i, 55, 'eye' was used for 'a special tinge.' Cf. Fr. *œil*. — **investments**: vestments.

130. **bonds**. There seems no good reason for changing this, the plain reading of Quartos and Folios. Law papers are often headed with religious formulæ.

133. **slander**: so misuse as to cause slander. — **moment**: moment's. Abbott, § 430, prints 'moment-leisure,' and gives it as one of many instances of noun compounds where the first noun may be treated as a genitive used adjectively. Cf. 'region kites,' II, ii, 565, and 'music vows,' III, i, 156.

SCENE IV. *The platform*

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, *and* MARCELLUS

HAMLET. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.
HORATIO. It is a nipping and an eager air.
HAMLET. What hour now?
HORATIO. I think it lacks of twelve.
MARCELLUS. No, it is struck.
HORATIO. Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.
[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within*]
What does this mean, my lord?
HAMLET. The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,

SCENE IV Capell | Scene III Rowe | Scene VII Pope | Ff omit. — *The platform* | Ff omit.
1. **it is very cold.** Q_2 | is it very cold? Ff.
6. [*A flourish . . . within*] A florish of trompets and 2. peeces goes of Q_2 | Ff omit.

SCENE IV. Coleridge comments as follows:

The unimportant conversation with which this scene opens is a proof of Shakespeare's minute knowledge of human nature. It is a well-established fact, that, on the brink of any serious enterprise, or event of moment, men almost invariably endeavour to elude the pressure of their own thoughts by turning aside to trivial objects and familiar circumstances: thus this dialogue on the platform begins with remarks on the coldness of the air, and inquiries, obliquely connected indeed with the expected hour of the visitation, but thrown out in a seeming vacuity of topics, as to the striking of the clock, and so forth.

1. The question of the Folios, "is it very cold?" has been regarded as an indication that Horatio and Marcellus have been on the platform some time before Hamlet joins them. Cf. I, ii, 251–252.

2. **eager**: sharp. Old Fr. *aigre* (Lat. *acer*). Cf. I, v, 69.

8. **wake**: hold a late revel. — **rouse.** See note, I, ii, 127.

Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO. Is it a custom?

HAMLET. Ay, marry, is 't;
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations:
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,

9. **wassail** | wassell Q_2 | wassells Ff. 17-38. **This . . . scandal** Q_2 | Ff omit.
14. **But** Q_2 | And Ff.

9. **wassail**: carousal. The Anglo-Saxon *wes hál*, 'may you be in health,' the salutation used in drinking healths, was transferred by the Normans to a 'carousal.' — **up-spring**: a boisterous dance. Pope read 'upstart,' referring to the king. — **reels**: reels through.

18. **tax'd of**: censured by. Cf. *As You Like It*, II, vii, 71.

19. **clepe**: call. — **with swinish phrase**: by calling us swine.

20. **addition**: title. Cf. Macbeth, I, iii, 106; *King Lear*, I, i, 138.

22. **attribute**: reputation, i.e. what is attributed.

23. **particular**: individual. Hamlet is now wrought up to the highest pitch of expectancy, and he seeks relief from the pain of that over-intense feeling by launching off into a strain of general and abstract reflection. His state of mind aptly registers itself in the irregular and broken structure of his language.

24. **mole of nature**: natural, constitutional blemish.

As, in their birth — wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin —
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausive manners, that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star —
Their virtues else — be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo —
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal.

27. **the** Pope | their Q_2.
32. star | starre Q_2 | scar Pope (Theobald conj.).
33. **Their** Pope | His Q_2.
36-38. the dram . . . scandal Q_2Q_3 | Pope omits. See note.

27–28. By some native aptitude being indulged and fostered so much that it breaks down the proper guards and strongholds of reason. According to the old physiology, the bodily 'humours' (phlegm, blood, bile, and black bile) in just proportion resulted in a healthy 'complexion' ('weaving together,' Lat. *com-*, *plecto*) or 'temperament' ('mixture,' Lat. *tempero*). The excess of one of these 'humours' determined a phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric, or melancholic, 'complexion' or 'temperament.'

30. **plausive**: pleasing. Cf. *All's Well that Ends Well*, I, ii, 53.

32. A natural blemish, or one that has come from being born under an unlucky star. In Shakespeare are many allusions to the tenets of the old astrology. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, i, 349; *Julius Cæsar*, I, ii, 140.

36–38. Upwards of a hundred emendations of this passage have been suggested (see Furness and Camb), but not one is more satisfactory than the reading of the Second and Third Quartos given here in the text with modernized spelling. The passage does not occur

Enter GHOST

HORATIO. Look, my lord, it comes!

HAMLET. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd;
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell;
Be thy intents wicked or charitable;
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I 'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane; O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,

42. **intents** Q_2 | euents Ff. 49. **inurn'd** $F_2F_3F_4$ | enurn'd F_1 | interr'd Q_2.
45. **O** Q_2 | Oh, oh Ff.

in the First Quarto or in the Folios; the later Quartos give 'ease' for 'eale.' 'Eale' is now generally accepted as a contracted or a misspelled form of 'evil.' In II, ii, 586, the Second Quarto has 'deale' for 'devil.' For 'of a doubt,' Caldecott ingeniously suggested, 'often dout,' taking 'dout' in the sense of 'do out,' 'abolish,' 'extinguish,' as in IV, vii, 191; *Henry V*, IV, ii, 11. A most natural explanation of the passage as it stands is Professor Dowden's. He takes 'scandal' as a verb (cf. *Cymbeline*, III, iv, 62) and interprets thus: "Out of a mere doubt or suspicion the dram of evil degrades in reputation all the noble substance to its own [substance]." Dowden also suggests that 'scandal' may have been meant to precede 'to his own.'

43. **questionable**: inviting question or conversation. Cf. 'unquestionable spirit,' in *As You Like It*, III, ii, 393.

45. Furness suggests the punctuation, "King, father; royal Dane," etc., as giving a more satisfactory climax.

47. **canoniz'd**: consecrated by the canonical rites of sepulture. The accent is on the second syllable.

48. **cerements**: waxed wrappings for the dead. A dissyllable.

To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[GHOST *beckons* HAMLET]

HORATIO. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

MARCELLUS. Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground;
But do not go with it.

HORATIO. No, by no means.

HAMLET. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HORATIO. Do not, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again; I 'll follow it.

HORATIO. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff

53. **Revisit'st** F_4 | Revisits $F_1F_2F_3$.
61. **waves** Q_2 | wafts Ff.
63. **I will** Q_2 | will I Ff.
70. **summit** Rowe | somnet Q_2 | sonnet Ff.

54. **we fools of nature**: we who cannot by nature know the mysteries of the supernatural world. The grammar suggests a parenthetic exclamation; 'we' anticipates and explains 'our' in the next line.

61. **removed**: remote. Cf. *As You Like It*, III, ii, 360.

That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? think of it;
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.

HAMLET. It waves me still.
Go on; I 'll follow thee.

MARCELLUS. You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET. Hold off your hands!

HORATIO. Be rul'd; you shall not go.

HAMLET. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve. [GHOST *beckons*]
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen;
[*Breaking from them*]

72. **assume** Q_2 | assumes Ff.
75-78. **The very . . . beneath** Q_2 | Ff omit.
78. **waves** Q_2 | wafts Ff.
80. **hands** Q_2 | hand Ff.
83. **Nemean** | Nemeon Q_2 | Nemian F_1F_2.— [GHOST *beckons*] Malone | Ff omit.
84. [*Breaking . . . them*] Rowe | Ff omit.

71. **beetles o'er his**: overhangs its. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 32.

73. Which might take away the sovereignty of your reason. It was anciently believed that evil spirits sometimes assumed the guise of deceased persons, to draw men into madness and suicide, as is here apprehended of the Ghost.

75. **toys of desperation**: freakish notions of suicide.

82. 'Artery,' 'nerve' (line 83), and 'sinew' were often used interchangeably by Elizabethan writers.

83. **Nemean**. Accented here on first syllable, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, i, 90. To strangle the Nemean lion was one of the labors imposed on Hercules by Eurystheus.

By heaven, I 'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away! Go on; I 'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt* GHOST *and* HAMLET]

HORATIO. He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS. Let 's follow; 't is not fit thus to obey him.

HORATIO. Have after. To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HORATIO. Heaven will direct it.

MARCELLUS. Nay, let 's follow him.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE V. *Another part of the platform*

Enter GHOST *and* HAMLET

HAMLET. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I 'll go no further.

GHOST. Mark me.

HAMLET. I will.

GHOST. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

HAMLET. Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET. Speak; I am bound to hear.

SCENE V Capell | Scene VIII | Ff omit.
Pope | Scene continued in Ff. — *Another part of the platform* Capell | 1. Where Ff Delius | Whether Q2 | Whither Globe Camb.

85. lets: hinders. Etymologically distinct from 'let' meaning 'allow.' See Murray.

91. it: the issue. 'Nay' refers to Horatio's words and implies, Let us look after the matter ourselves.

GHOST. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.
HAMLET. What?
GHOST. I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine;
But this eternal blazon must not be

18. **knotted** Q_2 | knotty Ff.
19. **an end** Ff | on end Q_1 Pope.
20. fretful F_4 | fretfull $Q_1F_1F_2F_3$ | fearefull Q_2.

11. Cf. Chaucer, *The Persones Tale:* "And moreover the miseise of helle shal been in defaute of mete and drinke."

17. **like stars, start from their spheres.** One of the many allusions in Shakespeare and English poetry generally (cf. Chaucer, *The Parlement of Foules*, 59–63) to the old Ptolemaic doctrine that the stars were set in crystalline shells that revolved in music (*cf. The Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 60–61) round the earth. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 153–154:

> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
> To hear the sea-maid's music.

19. 'An' is the original form of the preposition 'on.'

20. **porpentine**: porcupine. Always spelled thus in Shakespeare.

21. **eternal blazon**: disclosure of the mysteries of eternity. Shakespeare sometimes uses 'eternal' in the sense of 'infernal' (cf. the old slang term ''tarnal'), and it is possible, though hardly probable, that this is the meaning here.

To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love —

HAMLET. O God!

GHOST. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET. Murder!

GHOST. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAMLET. Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST. I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
It 's given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abus'd; but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

22. **List, list, O** Q_2 | list Hamlet. oh Ff.
24. **God** Q_2 | Heauen Ff.
29. Two lines in Ff. — **Haste** Rowe | Hast. hast Ff. — **I** | Ff omit.
33. **roots** | rootes Q_2 | rots Ff.
35. **It 's** Ff | 'T is Q_2. — **mine** Ff | my Q_2.

32. **fat weed**. The many bulbed asphodel that bloomed on the meadows of the lower world, the poppy, and the slumberous yew which, according to Seneca, overhangs Lethe, have been suggested as the plant referred to.

33. **Lethe wharf**: the place on the banks of the river of forgetfulness where the old boatman Charon had his moorings.

35. 'Orchard' in Shakespeare usually means 'garden.'

37. **process**: official narrative. Clar suggests that 'process' here comes nearly to the meaning of Fr. *procès verbal*.

HAMLET. O my prophetic soul! 40
Mine uncle!

GHOST. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts —
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce! — won to his shameful lust 45
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage; and to decline 50
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd, 55
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always in the afternoon, 60
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,

41. **Mine** Ff | my Q_2.
43. **wit** Pope | wits Q_2Ff. — **with** Q_2 | hath $F_1F_2F_3$ | and F_4.
45. **to his** $Q_2F_3F_4$ | to this F_1.
52-53. One line in Q_2Ff.
56-57. One line in Ff. — **sate** F_1F_2 | sort Q_2 | seat F_3F_4.
58. **morning** Q_2 | mornings Ff.
59, 63. **mine** Ff | my Q_2.
60. **in** Ff | of Q_2.

40. Hamlet has suspected "some foul play" (I, ii, 255), and now his suspicion seems prophetic.

42. **adulterate**: adulterous. Cf. 'emulate,' I, i, 83.

52. **To**: in comparison with. Cf. I, ii, 140. See Abbott, § 187.

61. **secure**: unsuspecting. Cf. Lat. *securus*. 'Secure' here, as in *Othello*, IV, i, 72, is accented on the first syllable.

With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body;
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd;

62. **hebenon** Ff | Hebona Q_2.
67. **alleys** Hanmer | allies Q_2Ff.
68. **posset** Ff | possesse Q_2.
69. **eager** Q_2 | Aygre Ff.
71. **bark'd** . barckt Q_2 | bak'd Ff.
75. **of queen** Q_2 | and Queene F_1.

62. **hebenon**. Of the many conjectures what this is ('ebony,' 'hemlock,' *ebenus* meaning 'yew,' etc.), the most reasonable is 'henbane,' the oil of which, according to Pliny, "if it be but dropped into the eares is ynough to trouble the brain" (Holland's translation, 1601). Marlowe mentions the 'juice of hebon' among the poisons of the Stygian pool, *The Jew of Malta*, III, iv, 102.

65–67. Here, and in *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 289–290, is embodied what was known about the circulation of the blood in the opening years of the seventeenth century. In 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, Harvey lectured on his great discovery, but his famous treatise was not published until twelve years later.

68. **posset**: coagulate. "Posset is hot milk poured on ale or sack, having sugar, grated bisket, and eggs, with other ingredients boiled in it, which all goes to a curd." — *Academie of Armourie*, 1688.

69. **eager**. "Aigre: Eagre, sharp, tart, biting, sower."—Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*, 1611. Cf. I, iv, 2.

71. **instant**: immediate. — **bark'd**: covered as with bark.

Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And gins to pale his uneffectual fire;
Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [*Exit*]

91. **Adieu, adieu, adieu!** Q2 | Adue, adue, Hamlet: F1.

77. **Unhousel'd**: without receiving the eucharist. — **disappointed**: un-appointed, unprepared. — **unanel'd**: without extreme unction. "My fair lords, said Sir Launcelot . . . give me my rites. So when he was houseled and aneled, and had all that a christian man ought to have, he prayed the Bishop that his fellows might bear his body to Joyous Gard." — *Le Morte Darthur*, XXI, xii. When Pope suggested 'unanointed' for 'disappointed,' he interpreted 'unanel'd' as 'without a knell being rung.'

80. Stage tradition and many editors give this line to Hamlet.

83. **luxury**: licentiousness. Its only meaning in Shakespeare.

85. **Taint not thy mind.** This part of the injunction is well worth noting. Time and manner are left to Hamlet, only he is to keep himself clean from crime and from dishonor; his revenge must be righteous and according to the demands of justice, not merely personal.

90. **gins.** Usually printed ''gins,' but it is a distinct aphetic form of 'begin,' or 'ongin.' In Chaucer and Middle English literature the

HAMLET. O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart:
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there:
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables, my tables, — meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I 'm sure it may be so in Denmark.

93. **Hold, hold** Q_2 | hold Ff.
95. **stiffly** Ff | swiftly Q_2.
104. **yes, yes** Ff | yes Q_2.
107. **My tables, my tables** Ff | My tables Q_2.
109. Rowe inserted [*Writing*].

past tense 'gan' was "commonly used in a weakened sense as a mere auxiliary (= the modern 'did') serving to form a periphrastic preterite." — Murray. **uneffectual.** Probably because it gives light without heat. That the 'fire' fades as the daylight grows, may also be implied. Cf. *Pericles*, II, iii, 43–44:

> Where now his son's like a glow-worm in the night,
> The which hath fire in darkness, none in light.

97. globe: head. Hamlet's hand is pressed against his forehead.
98. table: tablet. Cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, vii, 3.
99. fond: foolish. — **records.** Accented on second syllable.
100. saws: maxims. — **pressures**: impressions. Cf. III, ii, 22.
107. tables: memorandum book. Cf. *2 Henry IV*, II, iv, 289.

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word; 110
It is, 'Adieu, adieu! remember me':
I have sworn 't.

HORATIO.
MARCELLUS. } [*Within*] My lord, my lord!

MARCELLUS. [*Within*] Lord Hamlet!

HORATIO. [*Within*] Heaven secure him!

HAMLET. So be it!

113. Scene IX Pope. 113–116. See note below.

110. **So, uncle, there you are.** This passage is usually taken in a literal and formal way, as if Hamlet were carefully writing down the axiomatic saying he has just uttered. Werder's view of the matter is suggestive:

> Hamlet pulls out his tablets, and jabs the point of his pencil once or twice into the leaf, because he cannot do the same to the king with his sword, as he would like to do, — nothing further; only such marks, such a sign, does he make. That stands for 'So, uncle, there you are!' And although he says he must write it down for himself, he does not literally write; that does not accord with his mood and situation.

— **word**: watchword, motto.

113–116. The dialogue is distributed in the First Folio as follows:

> *Hor. & Mar. within.* My Lord, my Lord.
>
> *Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*
>
> *Mar.* Lord *Hamlet.*
> *Hor.* Heauen secure him.
> *Mar.* So be it.
> *Hor.* Illo, ho, ho, my Lord.
> *Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy; come bird, come.

Camb keeps the Folio position of the stage direction, as in the darkness Hamlet may not see Horatio and Marcellus on their first entry. The Quartos give 'So be it!' to Hamlet. "There is something highly solemn and proper in making Hamlet say the Amen to a benediction pronounced on himself." — Capell. Furness suggests that 'So be it!' may refer to the conclusion of Hamlet's writing in his tables.

MARCELLUS. [*Within*] Illo, ho, ho, my lord! 115
HAMLET. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, bird, come.

Enter HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS

MARCELLUS. How is't, my noble lord?
HORATIO. What news, my lord?
HAMLET. O, wonderful!
HORATIO. Good my lord, tell it.
HAMLET. No; you'll reveal it.
HORATIO. Not I, my lord, by heaven.
MARCELLUS. Nor I, my lord.
HAMLET. How say you, then, would heart of man once think it?
But you'll be secret?
HORATIO. } Ay, by heaven, my lord.
MARCELLUS. }
HAMLET. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark —
But he's an arrant knave.
HORATIO. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave 125
To tell us this.
HAMLET. Why, right; you are i' th' right:
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:
You, as your business and desire shall point you,
For every man has business and desire, 130

129. **desire** Q_2 | desires Ff. 130. has $F_2F_3F_4$ | ha's F_1 | hath Q_2.

116. Hamlet here imitates the falconer's call to his hawk.
127. **circumstance**: circumlocution, beating about the bush.

Such as it is; and, for mine own poor part,
Look you, I 'll go pray.

HORATIO. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

HAMLET. I 'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.

HORATIO. There's no offence, my lord.

HAMLET. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you;
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

HORATIO. What is 't, my lord? We will.

HAMLET. Never make known what you have seen tonight.

HORATIO. } My lord, we will not.
MARCELLUS. }

HAMLET. Nay, but swear 't.

HORATIO. In faith,

131. **mine** Ff | my Q_2.
133. **whirling** Theobald | whurling Q_2 | hurling Ff.
136. **Horatio** Q_2 | my Lord Ff.

136. Warburton has ingeniously defended Shakespeare's making the Danish prince swear by St. Patrick, by observing that the whole northern world had their learning from Ireland. St. Patrick, too, was regarded as the keeper of Purgatory.

138. **honest ghost**. Hamlet probably means that the Ghost is a real ghost, just what it appears to be, and not "the devil" in "a pleasing shape," as Horatio had apprehended it to be. But cf. II, ii, 586. See note, I, iv, 73.

140. **O'ermaster 't as you may**: subdue your desire as best you can.

My lord, not I.

MARCELLUS. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAMLET. Upon my sword.

MARCELLUS. We have sworn, my lord, already.

HAMLET. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?

Come on; you hear this fellow in the cellarage.
Consent to swear.

HORATIO. Propose the oath, my lord.

HAMLET. Never to speak of this that you have seen.
Swear by my sword.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET. Hic et ubique? Then we 'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,

149. [*Beneath*] Capell | Ghost cries vnder the Stage Ff (after **Swear**).

150–151. Prose in Ff.

155, 161, 182. [*Beneath*] Capell Ff omit.

147. The oath they have already sworn is 'in faith.' But this has not enough of ritual solemnity in it to satisfy Hamlet. The custom of swearing by the sword, or rather by the cross at the hilt of it, is very ancient. The name of Christ was sometimes inscribed on the handle. So that swearing by one's sword was the most solemn oath a Christian soldier could take.

150. **truepenny**: honest old fellow. Dowden thus explains this banter:

> Hamlet's recoil from horror to half-hysterical jesting is justified to his own consciousness as intended to divert the conjectures of his companions from the dreadful nature of the Ghost's disclosure, which he cannot reveal to Horatio in the presence of Marcellus.

156. **Hic et ubique**: here and everywhere. E. K. Chambers suggests that as Shakespeare rarely introduces Latin words in ordinary dialogue, it is probable that this scene contains fragments of an older play.

And lay your hands again upon my sword.
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword.
GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.
HAMLET. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.
HORATIO. O day and night! but this is wondrous strange.
HAMLET. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.
But come:
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself —
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on —
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, and if we would,'
Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, and if they might,'

162. **earth** Q_2 | ground Ff.
167. **our** Ff | your Q_2.
167-168. One line in Ff.
170. **soe'er** | so ere Ff | so were Q_2.
173. **times** Q_2 | time Ff.
174. **this head-shake** | thus, head shake Ff.
176. **Well, well** Q_2 | well Ff.
176, 177. **and if** Ff | an if Hanmer.
177. **they** Q_2 | there Ff.

163. **pioner**: digger. It is, of course, the same word as 'pioneer.' For the form, cf. 'enginer,' III, iv, 204

172. **antic**: fantastic. The same word etymologically as 'antique.'

174. **encumber'd thus**. Cf. 'in this sad knot,' *The Tempest*, I, ii, 224.

176, 177. **and if**. An intensification (cf. 'or ere,' I, ii, 147) of the conditional use of 'and,' which in this sense is usually spelled 'an' in modern editions. See Abbott, § 101.

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me ; — this not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear.

GHOST. [*Beneath*] Swear.

HAMLET. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit ! [*They swear*] So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you :
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, t' express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together ;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint : O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right !
Nay, come ; let 's go together. [*Exeunt*]

179. **aught** Q_1 | ought Q_2Ff. 184. **I do** F_1 | $F_2F_3F_4$ omit.
183. [*They swear*] Globe Camb. 190. **set** F_1F_2 | see F_3F_4.

178. **giving out**: intimation, profession of knowledge. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, I, iv, 54 ; *Othello*, IV, i, 131. — **to note**. An anacoluthon which Theobald tried to avoid by reading 'denote.'

186. **friending**: friendliness. From the verb 'friend.' Cf. *Henry V*, IV, v, 17 ; *Measure for Measure*, IV, ii, 116 ; *Troilus and Cressida*, I, ii, 84.

ACT II

SCENE I. *A room in* POLONIUS'S *house*

Enter POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO

POLONIUS. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

REYNALDO. I will, my lord.

POLONIUS. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behaviour.

REYNALDO. My lord, I did intend it.

POLONIUS. Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep;
What company, at what expense; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question

A room ... house Globe | Ff omit. — *Enter* ... REYNALDO | Enter ... Reynoldo Ff | Enter old Polonius with his man or two Q_2.

1. **this** Q_2 | his Ff. — **Reynaldo** Q_2 | Reynoldo Ff (so in lines 3, 15).

3. **marvellous** Q_5 | meruiles Q_2 | maruels F_1 | marvels $F_2F_3F_4$.

4. **to make inquire** Q_2 | you make inquiry Ff.

6. As in Q_2. Two lines in Ff. — **Marry** Ff | Mary $Q_2Q_3Q_4$.

4. **inquire**: inquiry. Cf. *Pericles*, III, Prologue, line 22.

7. **me**: for me. See Abbott, § 220. — **Danskers**: Danes.

8. **keep**: live. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, iii, 19.

10–12. This seems illogical, and would be so in any mouth but a politician's, as implying that general inquiries would come to the point faster than particular ones. But 'your,' in line 12, is used indefinitely almost in the sense of 'any'; 'it,' too, is used indefinitely;

That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:
Take you, as 't were, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,
And in part him.' Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

REYNALDO. Ay, very well, my lord.

POLONIUS. 'And in part him: but,' you may say, 'not well:
But, if 't be he I mean, he 's very wild,
Addicted so and so'; and there put on him
What forgeries you please: marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him; take heed of that:
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

REYNALDO. As gaming, my lord?

POLONIUS. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Drabbing; you may go so far.

REYNALDO. My lord, that would dishonour him.

POLONIUS. Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency;

11-12. **nearer Than** Capell | neerer Then Q_2F_1 | neere Than F_2. 14. **As** Q_2 | And Ff. 28. **no** Ff | Q_2 omits.

the scheme here laid down is to steal upon the truth by round-about statements and questions, or, as it is put in line 65, "By indirections find directions out."

19. **put on him**: lay to his charge. Cf. *Macbeth*, II, iv, 26.

28. **season**: qualify, mitigate. Cf. I, ii, 192.

30. **open to incontinency**: habitually incontinent. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare 'open of' was read in the sense of 'openly,' and so 'shamelessly.' Polonius is fond of nice distinctions.

That 's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

REYNALDO. But, my good lord, —

POLONIUS. Wherefore should you do this?

REYNALDO. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.

POLONIUS. Marry, sir, here 's my drift,
And I believe it is a fetch of warrant:
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 't were a thing a little soil'd i' the working,
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assur'd
He closes with you in this consequence;
'Good sir,' or so; or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.

REYNALDO. Very good, my lord.

31. **breathe** F_2 | breath F_1.
38. **warrant** Ff | wit Q_2 Globe.
41-42. One line in Ff.
47. **or** Q_2 | and Ff.

31. **breathe**: whisper. Cf. line 44; I, iii, 130.—**quaintly**: ingeniously.

34-35. **A savageness . . . assault**: a wildness of untamed blood, such as youth is generally assailed by.

38. **fetch of warrant**: allowable stratagem or device.

43-44. Having at any time seen the youth you whisper of guilty of the before-mentioned vices.

45. **closes . . . consequence**: agrees with you in this conclusion.

47. **addition**: title. Cf. I, iv, 20.

POLONIUS. And then, sir, does he this — he does — what was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to say something; where did I leave?

REYNALDO. At 'closes in the consequence': at 'friend or so,' and 'gentleman.'

POLONIUS. At 'closes in the consequence,' — ay, marry; He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman;
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
Or then, or then, with such, or such, and, as you say,
There was he gaming, there o'ertook in 's rouse,
There falling out at tennis;' or perchance,
'I saw him enter such a house of sale.'
See you now,
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out:

49–53. Verse in Ff.
50. **By the mass** Q_2 | Ff omit.
55. **closes thus** Q_2 | closes with you thus Ff.
57. **or such** Q_2 | and such Ff.
62. **carp** | carpe Q_2 | cape Ff.

55. **He closes thus.** This, the Quarto reading, is more characteristic than that of the Folios. "Polonius recovers his thought, but not the phrase with which he had introduced it, and naïvely adopts Reynaldo's blundering report of what he had said." — Herford.

58. **o'ertook in 's rouse**: overcome with drink. Cf. I, ii, 127.

63. **of wisdom and of reach**: of far-reaching wisdom.

64. **windlasses**: circuitous paths. The word is so used more than once in Golding's *Ovid*. **assays of bias**: trials of inclination. 'Bias' is a technical expression in bowls for the curve the bowl takes in consequence of its special shape or weighting. See Murray. Bowls was a favorite Elizabethan game, and Shakespeare has several figures taken from it. Cf. III, i, 65; *Henry V*, II, ii, 188; V, ii, 33; *King John*, III, iv, 128; *Richard II*, III, iv, 3–5.

So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

REYNALDO. My lord, I have.

POLONIUS. God b' wi' you! fare you well.

REYNALDO. Good my lord!

POLONIUS. Observe his inclination in yourself. 70

REYNALDO. I shall, my lord.

POLONIUS. And let him ply his music.

REYNALDO. Well, my lord.

POLONIUS. Farewell! [*Exit* REYNALDO]

Enter OPHELIA

How now, Ophelia! what 's the matter?

OPHELIA. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

POLONIUS. With what, i' the name o' God? 75

OPHELIA. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd;

68. **b' wi' you** | buy you Ff.
73. Scene II Pope.—*Enter* OPHELIA | in Ff after line 72.
74. **O, my lord** Q_2 | Alas Ff.
75. **God** Q_2 | Heauen Ff.
76. **closet** Q_2 Globe | chamber Ff.

67. **You have . . . not**: you understand me, do you not?

68. **God b' wi' you**. The old phrase 'God be with you,' given in *Macbeth*, III, i, 44, is here in process of abbreviation to the 'good-bye' of to-day. The Folio 'God buy you' represents probably the Elizabethan pronunciation.

70. Either, Use your own eyes upon him as well as learn from others; or, Comply with his inclinations so as to draw him out. An obsolete sense of 'observe' is, 'humor,' 'gratify.' Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, IV, iii, 45. Dowden suggests that 'in' here may mean 'with regard to.'

72. Let him fiddle his secrets all out. "Let him go his own way without interference." — E. K. Chambers. Schmidt, Vischer, and others take the expression literally.

75. **God**. The 'Heaven' of the Folios is an obvious concession to the famous statute of 1605 "to restrain the abuses of Players."

No hat upon his head ; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle ;
Pale as his shirt ; his knees knocking each other ;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.
POLONIUS. Mad for thy love?
OPHELIA. My lord, I do not know,
But truly I do fear it.
POLONIUS. What said he?
OPHELIA. He took me by the wrist and held me hard ;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so ;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being : that done, he lets me go ;
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And to the last bended their light on me.
POLONIUS. Come, go with me ; I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,

93. **piteous** | pittious Q_2F_1 | hideous $F_2F_3F_4$.
94. **That** Ff Delius' As Q_2 Globe.
96. **shoulder** Q_2 | shoulders Ff.
98. **help** F_3F_4 Delius | helpe F_1F_2 | helps Q_2 Globe Camb.

79. **down-gyved** : slipped down to the ankle like fetters.
94. **bulk** : frame. Sometimes it meant specifically 'the breast.'
101. **ecstasy** : madness. Cf. III, i, 160 ; III, iv, 74, 136, 137.

Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPHELIA. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.

POLONIUS. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him. I fear'd he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee; but beshrew my jealousy!
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:
This must be known; which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.
Come. [*Exeunt*]

110. **heed** | heede Q_2 | speed Ff.
111. **fear'd** Q_2 | fears F_1F_2.
112. **wreck** Theobald | wrack Q_2 | wracke F_1F_2.
113. **By heaven** Q_2 | It seemes F_1F_2.
119. **Come** Q_2 | Ff omit.

102. **fordoes**: destroys. Cf. V, i, 210. See Murray.

111. **quoted**: observed. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 31: "What curious eye doth quote deformities?"

113–116. We old men are as apt to overreach ourselves with our own policy as the young are to fail through lack of thought. "In this admirable scene, Polonius, who is throughout the skeleton of his former skill in state-craft, hunts the trail of policy at a dead scent, supplied by the weak fever-smell in his own nostrils." — Coleridge.

117–118. The sense is rather obscure, but appears to be, By keeping Hamlet's love secret we may cause more of grief to others than of hatred on his part by disclosing it.

SCENE II. *A room in the castle*

Flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and* Attendants

KING. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
Since not th' exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from th' understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And since so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time; so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
So much as from occasions you may glean,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

SCENE II | Scene III Pope. — *A room . . . castle* Capell | Ff omit. — *Flourish* . . . Attendants Globe | Enter King, Queene, Rosincrane, and Guildensterne Cumalijs (i.e. *cum aliis*) F1.

5. I call Ff Delius | call Q2 Globe.

6. Since not Ff Delius | Sith nor Q2 Globe Camb.

10. dream dreame Q2, deeme F1.

12. since Ff | sith Q2. — humour Ff | hauior Q2.

16. occasions Ff | occasion Q2.

17. Omitted in Ff.

1. Rosencrantz . . . Guildenstern. See Introduction, Sources. Two Danish nobles named Rosincrance and Guildensterne were students at Padua in 1587–1589 and in 1603, and a Danish courtier called Rosencrance attended the coronation of James I.

QUEEN. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry and good-will
As to expend your time with us awhile
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

ROSENCRANTZ. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

GUILDENSTERN. We both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent
To lay our services freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

KING. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz:
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of ye,
And bring the gentlemen where Hamlet is.

GUILDENSTERN. Heavens make our presence and our practices

29. **We** Ff | But we Q_2 Globe. **ye** Ff | you Q_2.
36. As in Q_2. Two lines in Ff. — 37. **the** Ff | these Q_2.

22. **gentry**: courtesy, that which is characteristic of a gentleman. "Gentlemanlinesse or gentry, kindlinesse, naturall goodnesse. *Generositas.*"—Baret's *Alvearie*. Cf. V, ii, 109.

24. **supply and profit**: support and realization.

30. **bent**: extent of inclination. 'Bent' in this sense is a metaphor taken from archery; it means literally the extent to which a bow may be drawn. Cf. 'top of my bent,' III, ii, 357.

Pleasant and helpful to him!

QUEEN. Ay, amen! 39

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and some* Attendants]

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS. Th' ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd. 41

KING. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POLONIUS. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king; 45
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath us'd to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING. O, speak of that; that I do long to hear. 50

POLONIUS. Give first admittance to th' ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

KING. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit* POLONIUS]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper. 55

QUEEN. I doubt it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

KING. Well, we shall sift him.

39. **Ay** Q_2 | Ff omit.
45. **and** Q_2 | one Ff.
48. **it hath** Q_2 | I haue Ff.
50. **I do** Ff | do I Q_2.
52. **fruit** | fruite Q_2 | newes F_1F_2.
53. [*Exit* POLONIUS] Ff omit.
54. **dear Gertrude** | deere Gertrard Q_2 | sweet Queene, that F_1.

42. **still**: constantly. Cf. I, i, 122; *As You Like It*, I, ii, 239.
43. **Assure**: I assure. Cf. 'beseech,' *The Tempest*, I, ii, 473; II, i, 1.
56. **doubt**: fear. — **the main**: the matter of chief interest.

Re-enter POLONIUS, *with* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS

Welcome, my good friends!
Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?
VOLTIMAND. Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: whereat griev'd,
That so his sickness, age, and impotence
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give th' assay of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack;
With an entreaty, herein further shown, [*Giving a paper*]
That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,

58. Scene IV Pope. — *Re-enter* . . . CORNELIUS | Enter Polonius, Voltumand, and Cornelius F1 (after line 57). — **my** Q2 | Ff omit.
73. **three** Ff | threescore Q2.
76. [*Giving a paper*] Malone | Ff omit.
78. **this** Q2 | his Ff.

61. **Upon our first**: immediately after our first audience.
64. 'Truly' modifies 'was' and not 'found.'
67. **borne in hand**: deluded, beguiled (cf. Fr. *maintenir*, from late Lat. *manutenere*). Cf. *Macbeth*, III, i, 81.
71. **assay of arms**: test of war. In III, iii, 69 'assay' means 'trial,' but in *Henry V*, I, ii, 151, it means 'attack,' 'onset.'

On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

KING. It likes us well;

And at our more consider'd time we 'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour.
Go to your rest; at night we 'll feast together:
Most welcome home! [*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS]

POLONIUS. This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad:
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.

QUEEN. More matter, with less art.

POLONIUS. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 't is true; 't is true 't is pity,
And pity 't is 't is true: a foolish figure!

85. [*Exeunt* ... CORNELIUS] Capell | Exit Ambass. Ff. — well Q_2 | very well Ff. 98. 't is 't is Q_2 | it is Ff.

79. **regards of safety and allowance**: pledges of safety to the country and terms of permission for the troops to pass.

80. **likes**: pleases. Cf. V, ii, 255; *Henry V*, IV, i, 16; IV, iii, 77; *King Lear*, II, ii, 96. Similarly 'dislikes,' in *Othello*, II, iii, 49.

81. **more consider'd time**: time for further consideration.

86. **expostulate**: discuss, "debate (a matter) as an aggrieved person." — Murray. Cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III, i, 251.

But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him then; and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause:
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.
I have a daughter — have whilst she is mine —
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this; now gather, and surmise.

[*Reads the letter*]

To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia, —

That 's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a vile phrase. But you shall hear. Thus:

In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.

QUEEN. Came this from Hamlet to her?

POLONIUS. Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful.

[*Reads*]

Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love.

106. whilst F_2 | whil'st F_1 | while Q_2.
108. [*Reads the letter*] The Letter Ff.
113. etc. Q_2 | Ff omit.
115. [*Reads*] Letter Q_2 | Ff omit.

105. **Perpend**: consider. "A word only used by Pistol, Polonius, and the clowns." — Schmidt.

113. **these**. A common ending to the superscription of a letter. Hamlet's letter is couched in conventional euphuistic phrases.

118–121. In the double meanings of 'doubt' (meaning 'suspect,' for example, in line 118) and 'reckon' ('number metrically,' as Delius interprets) are characteristic word quibbles.

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear lady,
Whilst this machine is to him, HAMLET.

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me,
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

KING. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

POLONIUS. What do you think of me?

KING. As of a man faithful and honourable.

POLONIUS. I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing —
As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me — what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;

125. shown Q_2 shew'd Ff. | Q_2. — solicitings Q_2 | soliciting Ff.
126. above F_2 abone F_1 | about 132. this F_1F_2 | his F_3F_4.

124. While this body is his; while he lives. 'Machine' originally meant 'a structure of any kind.' See Murray. Cf. Wordsworth's "the very pulse of the machine," in *She was a Phantom of Delight*.

136. By keeping dark about the matter. A 'desk' or 'table-book' does not prate of what it contains. A 'table-book' is the 'tables' of I, v, 107.

137. If I had given my heart a hint to be mute about their passion. Cf. the original meaning of 'connivance,' 'a winking at.'

What might you think? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;
This must not be.' And then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed — a short tale to make —
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.

KING. Do you think 't is this?

QUEEN. It may be, very likely.

POLONIUS. Hath there been such a time — I 'd fain know that —
That I have positively said ''T is so,'
When it prov'd otherwise?

KING. Not that I know.

POLONIUS. Take this from this, if this be otherwise.
If circumstances lead me, I will find

141. **star** | sphere $F_2F_3F_4$.
142. **precepts** Ff | prescripts Q2 Globe.
150. **wherein** Q2 | whereon Ff.
151. **mourn** | mourne Q2 | wail Ff.

139. **round**: straightforwardly. Some interpret 'round' in the sense of 'straightway.' Cf. III, i, 183; *As You Like It*, V, iii, 11.

141. **out of thy star**: not in thy destiny. Another allusion to the supposed influence of the stars on the fortune of life.

156. Theobald suggested, and Pope added here as a stage direction, 'Pointing to his head and shoulders.' "But see lines 166, 167. May not 'this from this' mean the chamberlain's staff or wand and the hand that bears it?" — Dowden.

Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

KING. How may we try it further?

POLONIUS. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together

Here in the lobby.

QUEEN. So he does, indeed.

POLONIUS. At such a time I 'll loose my daughter to him:
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

KING. We will try it.

Enter HAMLET, *reading on a book*

QUEEN. But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

POLONIUS. Away, I do beseech you, both away:

160-161. Three lines in Ff. — **four** F3F4 | foure F1F2 | for Hanmer. **does** | dooes Q2 | ha's F1 | has F2.
167. **But** Q2 | And Ff.
168. Scene V Pope. — *Enter* HAMLET . . . Ff Globe Camb omit *on a book* and introduce after **presently** in line 170.

159. **centre**: centre of the earth, which, according to the old Ptolemaic astronomy, was the centre of the solar system or universe.

163. In Shakespeare's time the chief rooms of houses were lined with tapestry hangings, which were suspended on frames, some distance from the walls, to keep them from being rotted by the damp. These tapestries were called 'arras,' from the town Arras, in northern France, famed for the manufacture of the fabric.

168. 'Wretch' was sometimes used as a strong term of endearment with a dash of pity in it. Cf. *Othello*, III. iii, 90: "Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul, But I do love thee!"

I 'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt* KING, QUEEN, *and* Attendants]

O, give me leave.

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET. Well, God-a-mercy.

POLONIUS. Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET. Excellent well; you 're a fishmonger.

POLONIUS. Not I, my lord.

HAMLET. Then I would you were so honest a man.

POLONIUS. Honest, my lord!

HAMLET. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

POLONIUS. That 's very true, my lord.

HAMLET. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion, — Have you a daughter?

POLONIUS. I have, my lord.

HAMLET. Let her not walk i' th' sun; conception is a blessing, but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.

POLONIUS. [*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I was

179. **ten** Q_5 | tenne Q_2 | two Ff. 182. **good** Q_2Ff | God Hanmer (Warburton conj.) Globe Delius. 185. **not as** Ff Globe Delius | as Q_2 Clar Camb. 187. [*Aside*] Capell | Ff omit.

170. **board**: accost, address. — **presently**: immediately.

174. **fishmonger**. There is ample evidence that this was a coarse slang term of contempt in Shakespeare's day. Of course the expression may imply that Polonius has come to 'fish' his secret, the old angler that he is. Cf. II, i, 62.

182. **a good kissing carrion**: carrion fit for kissing (by the sun). Cf. the common expression 'good haymaking weather.'

187. **by**: concerning. See Abbott, § 145.

a fishmonger; he is far gone, far gone: and truly in my youth I suffer'd much extremity for love; very near this. I 'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord? 191

HAMLET. Words, words, words.

POLONIUS. What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET. Between who?

POLONIUS. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord. 195

HAMLET. Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkl'd, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams; all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward. 203

POLONIUS. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord? 205

HAMLET. Into my grave?

POLONIUS. Indeed, that is out o' th' air. [*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and suddenly

195. **that you read** Q_2 | you meane F_1F_2.
196. **rogue** Q_2 | slaue Ff.
198. **amber and** Q_2 | Amber, or Ff.
199. **lack** | lacke Q_2 | locke F_1F_2. — **most** Q_2 | Ff omit.
202. **you yourself** | you your selfe F_1F_2 | your selfe Q_2. — **should be old** Ff | shall grow old Q_2.
204. [*Aside*] Johnson | Ff omit.
204–205. Verse in Ff.
206. **grave?** Ff | graue Q_2.
210–211. **and suddenly . . . between him** | Q_2 omits.

194. **who**. For neglect in the inflection of 'who,' see Abbott, § 274. Hamlet interprets 'matter' as both 'subject-matter' and 'cause of dispute.'

196. **the satirical rogue**. Probably Juvenal. Cf. *Satires*, X, 188.

208. **pregnant**: clever. — **happiness**: felicity of expression.

contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal, — [*Aside*] except my life, except my life, except my life.

POLONIUS. Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN

POLONIUS. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

ROSENCRANTZ. [*To* POLONIUS] God save you, sir! [*Exit* POLONIUS]

GUILDENSTERN. Mine honour'd lord!

ROSENCRANTZ. My most dear lord!

HAMLET. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

ROSENCRANTZ. As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUILDENSTERN. Happy, in that we are not overhappy; On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAMLET. Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROSENCRANTZ. Neither, my lord.

215. **will** Ff | will not Q_2.
215-216. [*Aside*] White | Ff omit. — **except my life** | three times as here in Q_2 | except my life, my life Ff.
219. *Enter* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN | after **there he is** in Ff.
220. Scene VI Pope. — [*To* POLONIUS] Malone | Ff omit. — [*Exit* POLONIUS] Capell | Ff omit.
221. **Mine** Ff | My Q_2.
224. **Ah** | A Q_2 | Oh Ff.
225. **ye** Ff | you Q_2 Camb.

215. **withal**: with. The emphatic form. See Abbott, § 196.
225. Corson comments on the playfulness implied in 'ye.'
226. **indifferent**: middling, tolerably well off. Cf. III, i, 122.

HAMLET. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours? What 's the news?

ROSENCRANTZ. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

HAMLET. Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular. What have you, my good friends, deserv'd at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither? 238

GUILDENSTERN. Prison, my lord!

HAMLET. Denmark 's a prison. 240

ROSENCRANTZ. Then is the world one.

HAMLET. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' th' worst.

ROSENCRANTZ. We think not so, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, then 't is none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison. 247

ROSENCRANTZ. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 't is too narrow for your mind.

HAMLET. O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. 252

GUILDENSTERN. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream. 255

236–265. Let . . . attended | Q_2 omits.

252. **bad dreams.** "Malone — perhaps by a printer's error — read 'had dreams,' a noble emendation, as Johnson might have called it, attained probably by accident." — Dowden.

254. **very substance of the ambitious**: that seemingly most substantial thing which the ambitious pursue. Cf. Burke's saying (*Speech at Bristol on Declining the Poll*): "What shadows we are,

HAMLET. A dream itself is but a shadow.

ROSENCRANTZ. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

HAMLET. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretch'd heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason. 261

ROSENCRANTZ. } We 'll wait upon you.
GUILDENSTERN. }

261. **fay** Pope | fey Ff.

and what shadows we pursue." But perhaps the greatest commentary on this passage in *Hamlet* are the words of Prospero, *The Tempest*, IV, i, 156–158:

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

260–261. **outstretch'd**: glorified. Delius thinks that Hamlet has in mind strutting stage heroes, but may not the allusion be to the sculptured images of kings and heroes on their monuments? Hamlet is here playing or fencing with words, and seems to lose himself in the riddles he is making. The meaning is anything but clear; perhaps was not meant to be understood. He says that he 'cannot reason.' But 'bodies' is no doubt put for 'substance' or 'substances,' and the sense appears to depend partly upon the fact that 'substance' and 'shadow' are antithetic and correlative terms, as there can be no shadow without a substance to cast it. Dr. Bucknill's comment is to the point:

> If ambition is but a shadow, something beyond ambition must be the substance from which it is thrown. If ambition, represented by a king, is a shadow, the antitype of ambition, represented by a beggar, must be the opposite of the shadow, that is, the substance.

261. **fay**: faith. 'Fay,' 'fey' (the Folio spelling) "passed into English from contemporary French about 1300, and for a time was almost as common as the earlier form ('faith'), especially in certain senses, and in phrases such as 'par fay,' 'by my fay' (Old Fr. *par fei, par ma fei*)." — Murray.

HAMLET. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore? 266

ROSENCRANTZ. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

HAMLET. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak. 272

GUILDENSTERN. What should we say, my lord?

HAMLET. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour. I know the good king and queen have sent for you. 277

ROSENCRANTZ. To what end, my lord?

HAMLET. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserv'd love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no. 284

ROSENCRANTZ. [*Aside to* GUILDENSTERN] What say you?

HAMLET. [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you. If you love me, hold not off. 287

268. **even** Ff | euer Q2. 275. **kind of** Q2 | kind Ff.

265. **dreadfully attended**. Probably by the 'bad dreams' of line 252.

266. **what make you**: what are you doing? Cf. I, ii, 164.

270. **dear** a. For omission of prepositions after adjectives that imply value or worth, see Abbott, § 198 a.

286. **of you**: on you. Cf. 'of' for 'over,' II, ii, 27.

GUILDENSTERN. My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late — but wherefore I know not — lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man

290. **discovery, and** | discouery of Ff.
292-293. **exercises** Q_2 | exercise Ff.
293. **heavily** Q_2 | heauenly Ff.
296. **firmament** Q_2 | Ff omit.
299. **a man** Q_2Ff Globe Delius | man Q_6 Dyce.
300. **faculty** Ff | faculties Q_2.

290. **prevent your discovery**: anticipate your disclosure. Hamlet's fine sense of honor is well shown here. He will not tempt the courtiers to any breach of confidence, and he means that, by telling them the reason, he will forestall and prevent their disclosure of it.

296. **fretted**: adorned. See Skeat. Cf. *Cymbeline*, II, iv, 87–88: "The roof o' the chamber With golden cherubins is fretted."

300. **express**: "exact, fitted to its purpose, as the seal fits the stamp. So in *Hebrews*, i, 3, 'express image' is the rendering of the Greek *χαρακτήρ*." — Clar.

303. The 'quintessence' (from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth accented on the first syllable) was "the 'fifth essence' of ancient and mediæval philosophy, supposed to be the substance of which the heavenly bodies were composed and to be actually latent in all things." — Murray.

delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. 305

ROSENCRANTZ. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAMLET. Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me?'

ROSENCRANTZ. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you; we coted them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service. 313

HAMLET. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere;

308. **then** Q_2 | Ff omit. 317-318. **the clown . . . sere** | Q_2 omits. 318. **tickle o' the sere** Globe Camb tickled a' th' sere F_1.

311. **lenten**: meagre. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 9. There may also be a sly allusion to an order of the Privy Council passed June 22, 1600, "for the restraint of the immoderate use of play-houses," which instructed that no plays be given on Sunday or in Lent. This order was never enforced.

312. **coted**: overtook and passed. A hunting, or coursing, term.

317. **humorous**: crotchety, moody, subject to fits and starts, full of 'humors.' Cf. note, I, iv, 27. Such a character part on the stage is always interesting.

318. **lungs**. The lungs were always regarded as the seat of laughter. Cf. *The Tempest*, II, i, 173; *As You Like It*, II, vii, 30. — **tickle o' the sere**: easily moved to laughter. In 1871 Dr. Brinsley Nicholson and the editors of the Clarendon Press *Hamlet* independently explained the figure here which had been a puzzle to all previous commentators. The 'sere' ('sear,' 'serre') is the catch of a gunlock that holds the hammer. Hamlet is praising ironically the extemporized witticisms of the clowns.

and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for 't. What players are they?

ROSENCRANTZ. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

HAMLET. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROSENCRANTZ. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

HAMLET. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so follow'd?

ROSENCRANTZ. No, indeed, they are not.

HAMLET. How comes it? do they grow rusty?

321. such Q_2 | Ff omit
328. they are Ff | are they Q_2.
330–354. HAMLET. How comes it? . . . his load too Ff | Q_2 omits.

319–320. If through delicacy 'the lady' should omit anything, the halting verse will betray the omission.

323. their residence: their remaining in the city. In 1601 Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's, was in disgrace at court and, not improbably, the members 'travelled.'

325. inhibition: stoppage of performances in the city. Not necessarily a legal 'prohibition,' though many editors find here a distinct allusion to such an 'order' as that referred to in note, line 311, or to the express 'inhibition' due to the visitation of the plague, 1603. But 'innovation,' followed by the account of the vogue of performances by companies of children (Children of the Chapel, Children of Paul's, etc.) in the regular theatres, lines 332–337, suggests that this new craze had the effect of 'inhibiting' for a while the regular performances.

330–354. The omission of this passage in the Quarto of 1604 is significant. After James's succession in May, 1603, the Lord Chamberlain's Men were promoted to be the King's Men, and in the following January 'the Children' became the Children of Her Majesty's Revels. How could the King's Men censure the Queen's Children? By the time the First Folio was published this difficulty was far in the past.

ROSENCRANTZ. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace; but there is, sir, an aerie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for 't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither. 337

HAMLET. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players — as it is most like, if their means are no better — their writers

332. **aerie** | ayrie F_1 | ayry F_2. — **eyases** Theobald | Yases Ff. 334. **berattle** F_2 be-ratled F_1. 342. **most like** Pope | like most Ff.

332. **aerie**: a sturdy brood. Originally 'nest of a bird of prey.' — **eyases**: young hawks taken from the nest to be trained.

333. **cry out on the top of question**: speak out shrilly on the burning question of the hour. Thus 'cry' continues the figure in 'eyases.' In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare the interpretation adopted was that of Joseph Crosby, Exclaim against (lampoon) those who are at the top of their profession (or, the best productions of the dramatic pen). The general meaning of the whole passage is, Now that these children actors are all the rage, the regular profession suffers. With shrill voices discussing the question of the hour, they are noisily applauded, and they so berate the theatres where regular actors perform that well known men, men of fashion (those 'wearing rapiers'), are afraid of being satirized by the children's playwrights and dare scarcely go to the play-houses.

339. **escoted**: paid. "*Escotter*. Every one to pay his shot." — Cotgrave. **quality**: actor's profession. Cf. line 420; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV, i, 58.

340. The 'children' were choristers; Hamlet refers to their voices 'changing.'

342. **means are no better**. Cf. *Sonnets*, CXI, 3–4.

do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession? 344

ROSENCRANTZ. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy; there was for a while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAMLET. Is 't possible? 349

GUILDENSTERN. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAMLET. Do the boys carry it away?

ROSENCRANTZ. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too. 354

HAMLET. It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father liv'd, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little. 'S blood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within*]

355. **very** Q_2 | Ff omit. — **mine** Ff | my Q_2.
356. **mows** | mowes Ff | mouths $Q_2Q_3Q_4Q_5$ | mouthes Q_6.
357. **fifty** Q_2 | Ff omit.
358. **'S blood** Q_2 | Ff omit.

343–344. **exclaim . . . succession**: run down their own future careers.

346. **tarre**: set on. Cf. *King John*, IV, i, 117.

347. **argument**: plot of a play. Cf. III, ii, 213.

348. **question**. Either 'dialogue,' or more probably, as in line 333, 'controversy,' 'subject of dispute.' Here, as in the speeches immediately preceding, there is a very pointed allusion to the bitter 'war of the theatres,' in which all the leading dramatists of the time took part. See Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, Chap. XIII.

352. **carry it away**: carry all before them, win the day.

353. The sign of the Globe theatre was Hercules bearing the world.

356. **mows**: grimaces. In *The Tempest*, II, ii, 9, 'mow' is a verb.

358. **'S blood**: by God's blood. An oath by the eucharist.

GUILDENSTERN. There are the players.

HAMLET. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come; the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome; but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceiv'd.

GUILDENSTERN. In what, my dear lord?

HAMLET. I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Re-enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS. Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAMLET. Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too; at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

363. **this** Q_2 | the Ff.
365. **outward** Ff | outwards Q_2.
370. **handsaw** Ff | hand saw Q_2.
374. **swaddling** Q_2 | swathing Ff.

362. **appurtenance of**: that which properly belongs to.

363. **comply**: be formally courteous. Cf. V, ii, 181. — **garb**: fashion.

364. **extent**: the reception I extend. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, IV, i, 57.

369-370. **I am . . . handsaw**: I am mad only on one point; I have quick enough perception of the real facts of a case. The origin of the proverb has called forth much discussion. Some take 'hawk' in the sense of 'plasterer's tool' and let 'handsaw' alone. A more natural origin is in the sport of falconry; this would make 'handsaw' a corruption or misspelling of 'heronshaw' or 'hernsew' ('haw'nsaw' is a pronunciation in Yorkshire and Northumberland to-day), old and dialectic forms of 'heron.' Heath, in an interesting note quoted in full in Clar and in Furness, shows that implicit in the proverb is the keenness of trained vision. The explanation which makes the expression but one of the common alliterative phrases in

ROSENCRANTZ. Happily he 's the second time come to them, for they say an old man is twice a child.

HAMLET. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 't was so, indeed.

POLONIUS. My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAMLET. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, —

POLONIUS. The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAMLET. Buz, buz!

POLONIUS. Upon mine honour, —

HAMLET. Then came each actor on his ass, —

POLONIUS. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited; Seneca cannot be

377. **prophesy he** | prophecy, he Q_2 | Prophesie. Hee F_1 | Prophesie, He $F_2F_3F_4$.
378. o' Capell | a Q_2 | for a F_1.
382. **was** Q_2 | Ff omit.
385. **mine** Ff | my Q_2.
386. **came** Q_2 | can Ff.
390. **individable** | indiuible Ff.

which two quite dissimilar things are coupled ('bull from a barn-door,' for example) misses the double meaning in most of Hamlet's sayings of this kind.

375. **Happily**: haply, by chance. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, IV, ii, 57.

378–379. **You . . . indeed**. Spoken to mislead Polonius.

384. **Buz, buz!** "An interjection used at Oxford, when any one began a story that was generally known before." — Blackstone. "A sound to command silence." — Schmidt.

385–386. Polonius's "Upon mine honour" starts the poor joke, "If they are come on your honour, 'Then came each actor on his ass,'" — evidently a line from a ballad.

390. **scene individable**: a play observing the unity of place, which demanded that the events should occur in one and the same place. — **poem unlimited**: a play which disregards the limitations of the

too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men. 392

HAMLET. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

POLONIUS. What a treasure had he, my lord? 395

HAMLET. Why,

One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.

POLONIUS. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

393. **O Jephthah, judge of Israel** | as quotation Pope Delius.
395. **What a** Q2Ff | What Dyce.
399. [*Aside*] Capell | Ff omit.

unities of time and place. — **Seneca**. The influence of Seneca upon the early Elizabethan tragic drama was far-reaching. *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy, is a careful imitation of a Senecan play. Even *Hamlet* shows Senecan influence. See Cunliffe's *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*.

391–392. **Plautus**. The influence of Plautus upon the development of English comedy is similar to Senecan influence upon that of tragedy. *Roister Doister*, the first English comedy, is an imitation of Plautus's *Miles Gloriosus*. Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* is founded on the *Menaechmi*. — **the law of writ and the liberty**: obligation to be faithful to the text of written plays and freedom to improvise. "The regular (or classical) and the 'free' (romantic) methods of dramatic composition." — Herford. Hamlet is teasing the old fox, and quibbling between a logical and a literal sequence. The lines he quotes are from a popular Elizabethan ballad, registered in 1567 and 1568, entitled *Jephtha, Judge of Israel*. The first stanza is as follows:

I read that many years agoe,
When Jepha, Judge of Israel,
Had one fair daughter and no moe,
Whom he loved so passing well.
And as by lot, God wot,
It came to passe, most like it was,
Great warrs there should be,
And who should be the chiefe but he, but he.

HAMLET. Am I not i' th' right, old Jephthah?

POLONIUS. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

HAMLET. Nay, that follows not.

POLONIUS. What follows, then, my lord?

HAMLET. Why,

As by lot, God wot,

and then you know,

It came to pass, as most like it was, —

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look where my abridgments come.

Enter four or five Players

You 're welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! Thy

409. **pious chanson** Q_2Q_3 | Pons Chanson F_1 | Pans Chanson $F_2F_3F_4$ | godly Ballet Q_1.

410. **abridgments come** Ff Rowe Furness | abridgment comes Q_1Q_2 Globe Camb Delius.

409. **row of the pious chanson**: line (stanza, column) of the scriptural ballad. The Folio 'Pons Chanson' has doughty defenders, who refer to the *ponts neufs*, or popular songs with familiar airs, so called because sold in Paris on the Pont Neuf. But the 'godly Ballet' of the First Quarto is strong confirmation of the reading of the Second and Third Quartos.

410. Perhaps Hamlet calls the players "my abridgments" in the same sense as he afterwards calls them "the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time." He probably implies the further meaning of 'abridging' or 'cutting short' his talk with Polonius. Or the expression may mean that the players' office is to 'abridge the time,' or make it seem short — to minister pastimes. With this sense cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 39:

> Say what abridgment have you for this evening,
> What masque, what music?

face is valanc'd since I saw thee last; com'st thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress! By 'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not crack'd within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We 'll e'en to 't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see; we 'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech. 421

1 PLAYER. What speech, my lord?

HAMLET. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleas'd not the million; 'twas caviare to the

413. **valanc'd** Q_4Q_5 | valanct Q_2 Q_8 | valiant Ff.
415. **to heaven** Q_2 | heauen Ff.
419. **French** Ff | friendly Q_2.
422. **my** Ff Globe | my good Q_2 Camb Delius.
425. **caviare** Johnson | cauiary Q_2 | Cauiarie F_1 | Cautary $F_2F_3F_4$.

413. **valanc'd**: fringed. The player has lately grown a beard.

414–415. **By 'r lady**: by our Lady, by the Virgin Mary. Up to the time of the Restoration women's parts were taken by boys with unbroken voices. Hamlet is addressing an actor whom he had seen playing a heroine's rôle.

416. **chopine**: an Italian shoe with enormously high heels.

417–418. The old gold coin was thin and easily cracked. There was a 'ring' or circle on it within which the sovereign's head was stamped; if the crack extended beyond this ring, the coin was no longer current, and hence the simile applied to any other injured object. There is whimsical significance in the use of the expression here.

419–420. Hamlet's expression may imply either contempt or commendation. As a matter of fact, the French falconers were regarded as the most skilful in Europe.

425–426. **caviare to the general**: not relished by the multitude. This famous expression implies cultivated taste; the Russian delicacy made of sturgeon roe is pleasant only to a trained palate. The

general: but it was — as I receiv'd it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine — an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but call'd it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly lov'd: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's

427. **judgments** Q_2 | iudgement Ff.
430. **were** Q_2 | was Q_1Ff.
432. **affectation** Ff | affection Q_2.
432-433. **as wholesome . . . than fine** Q_2 | Ff omit.
434. **speech** Q_2 | cheefe Speech F_1

spelling of the Second Quarto, 'cauiary,' and of the First Folio, 'cauiarie,' indicates the Elizabethan pronunciation.

427. **cried in the top of**: spoke with greater authority than.

430. **sallets**: salads, of spicy herbs pungently dressed. "Spicy improprieties." — Dowden. The reference is to ribald impertinences or extravagances in words or expressions. In Cade's opening speech, *2 Henry VI*, IV, x, there is a series of quibbles upon 'sallet' meaning 'salad,' and 'sallet' 'a helmet.'

432. **affectation**. The 'affection' of the Quartos has the same meaning. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, i, 4: "witty without affection."

433. **more handsome than fine**: really beautiful, not merely showy.

434. **Æneas' tale to Dido**. There was published in 1594 a play called *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, stated on the title-page to be the work of Marlowe and Nash. It has been held that in what follows Shakespeare purposely burlesques this play, but nothing in Hamlet's lines approaches in extravagance the passage in *Dido* describing the murder of Priam by Pyrrhus. A reasonable theory is that in Shakespeare's 'tale' there is no intentional burlesque but a studied effort to reproduce that inflated tragic diction which was so popular when Shakespeare began his work as a dramatist, thus distinguishing, as Schlegel says, the language of the play within the play from that of the play itself.

slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see —

The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast, —

it is not so; it begins with Pyrrhus:

The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules, horridly trick'd
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their vile murders. Roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So, proceed you.

POLONIUS. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

1 PLAYER. Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide:

445. **total gules** | totall Gules Q_2 | to take Geulles F_1F_2 to take Geules F_3F_4.
448. **and** Ff Globe | and a Q_2 Camb.
449. **vile murders** Delius | vilde Murthers F_1 | Lords murther Q_2 | lord's murder Steevens Globe Camb.
453. As in Q_2 | Ff omit.
459. **match'd** Globe | matcht Q_2 | match Ff Camb.

438. **th' Hyrcanian beast**: "the Hyrcan tiger."—*Macbeth*, III, iv, 101.
445. **gules**: red. A heraldic term. — **trick'd**: adorned.

But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
Th' unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear; for, lo! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood;
And like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.
But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work,
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,

463. **this** Q_2 | his Ff.
469-470. As in Q_2 | one line in Ff.
476. **Aroused** Collier | A rowsed Q_2F_2 | A ro wsed F_1.
478. **Mars's armour** Capell | Marses Armor Q_2 | Mars his Armours Ff.

472. **rack**: driving storm clouds. Cf. Fletcher's "sailing rack that gallops upon the wings of angry winds" (*Women Pleased*); Keats's "cloudy rack slow journeying in the west" (*Endymion*); Longfellow's "driving rack of the rain-cloud" (*Courtship of Miles Standish*). Ben Jonson and Bacon use the word to describe the light upper clouds driven of the wind. Cf. *The Tempest*, IV, i, 156; *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV, xiv, 10. The root notion is 'drift' as in Icelandic *rek*. Cf. "the racking clouds," *3 Henry VI*, II, i, 27. So in the earliest unmistakable mention of the word in English literature, "þe rac dryueȝ," *The Deluge*, line 433, Alliterative Poems, about A.D. 1360, given in Morris and Skeat's *Specimens of Early English*.

475. **region**: sky. "Originally a division of the sky marked out by the Roman augurs." — Clar. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, II, ii, 21.

478. **proof eterne**: eternal resistance to assault. Cf. 'shot-proof,' etc.

With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven
As low as to the fiends!

POLONIUS. This is too long.

HAMLET. It shall to the barber's with your beard. Prithee, say on; come to Hecuba.

1 PLAYER. But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen —

HAMLET. 'The mobled queen?'

POLONIUS. That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

1 PLAYER. Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er teemed loins
A blanket, in th' alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd:
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport

483. **fellies** F_4 | follies Q_2Q_8 | Fallies $F_1F_2F_3$.

489, 490. **mobled** Q_2 | Mobled $F_2F_3F_4$ | inobled F_1.

491 **mobled . . . good** Ff | Q_2 omits.

492. Two lines in Ff. — **flames** Q_2 | flame Ff.

493. **upon** Q_2 | about Ff.

489. **mobled**: muffled. Cf. Shirley's *The Gentleman of Venice*, II, ii, 123–125:

> The moon does mobble up herself sometime in't.
> Where she will shew a quarter face, and was
> The first that wore a black bag.

493. **bisson rheum**: blinding tears. Cf. *Coriolanus*, II, i, 70.

In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven
And passion in the gods.

POLONIUS. Look, where he has not turn'd his colour and has tears in 's eyes. Pray you, no more.

HAMLET. 'T is well; I 'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do ye hear, let them be well us'd, for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time; after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you liv'd.

POLONIUS. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAMLET. God's bodykins, man, much better! use every man after his desert, and who should scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity; the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

506. **where** Q_2Ff|whether Malone Globe Camb | whe're Theobald | whe'er Delius.
507. **Pray you** Ff Globe | prethee Q_2 | Prithee Camb.
508-509. **of this** Q_2 | Ff omit.
511. **abstracts** Ff Delius|abstract Q_2 Globe Camb.
513. **liv'd**|liued Ff|live Q_2 Globe Camb.
516. **bodykins** Ff | bodkin Q_2. — **much** Q_2 | Ff omit.
517. **should** Ff Globe Delius|shall Q_2 Camb.

504. **milch**: moist with tears. Drayton has 'milch dew.'

505. **passion**: compassion. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 293. 'Passion' is the object of 'made.'

511. **abstracts . . . time**. In the Elizabethan age the drama, often dealing with and satirizing contemporary life, had an influence similar to that of the newspaper and the novel on the life of the present day.

516. **bodykins**: dear body. A diminutive of endearment. Another oath taken from the eucharist. Cf. note, line 358.

POLONIUS. Come, sirs.

HAMLET. Follow him, friends; we 'll hear a play to-morrow.

[*Exit* POLONIUS *with all the* PLAYERS *but the First*]

Dost thou hear me, old friend? can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

1 PLAYER. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. We 'll ha 't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in 't, could ye not?

1 PLAYER. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit* 1 PLAYER] My good friends, I 'll leave you till night; you are welcome to Elsinore.

ROSENCRANTZ. Good my lord!

HAMLET. Ay, so, God be wi' ye!

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN]

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

522. [*Exit . . . First*] Dyce | Exit Polon. Ff (after line 520).
528. **ye** Ff | you Q_2 Globe.
531. [*Exit* 1 PLAYER] Q_2 | Ff omit.
534. **be wi' ye** | b' wi' ye F_4 | buy 'ye $F_1F_2F_3$. — [*Exeunt . . .* Globe | Exeunt Q_2Ff (after line 533).— Scene VIII Pope.
538. **own** Q_2 | whole Ff.
539. **wann'd** | wand Q_2 | warm'd Ff.

527. Perhaps a reference to the speech of Lucianus, III, ii, 232–237.
541. **function**: "the whole energies of soul and body."— Caldecott.

With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What 's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appall the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculty of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettl'd rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by th' nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,

551. **faculty** Ff Rowe Furness | faculties Globe Delius Camb.

542. **conceit**: imagination. Cf. *As You Like It*, II, vi, 8.

546. **cue**. "A *qu*, a term vsed among Stage-plaiers, à Lat. *Qualis*, i.e. at what manner of word the Actors are to beginne to speake one after another hath done his speech." — Minsheu, 1625.

549. **free**: free from guile, innocent. So in III, ii, 222.

552–553. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, IV, iv, 23. — **peak**: "move about dejectedly, or silently; mope; 'make a mean figure'" (Johnson). — Murray. — **John-a-dreams**. "His name is Iohne, indeed, saies the cinnick, but neither Iohn-a-Nods, nor Iohn-a-dreames, yet either as you take Itt." — Armin, *Nest of Ninnies*, 1608.

555. **property**: "His crown, his wife, everything, in short, which he might be said to be possessed of, except his life." — Furness.

556. **defeat**: ruin, destruction. The original sense. Cf. V, ii, 58.

559–560. This was giving one the lie with the most galling additions

As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it; for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! Sure, this is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,

561. **Ha!** | Hah, Q_2 | Ha? Ff (beginning line 562).
562. **'Swounds** Q_2 | Why I Ff.
569. **Why,** | Why Q_2 | Who? Ff.
—**Sure** Ff | Q_2 omits.
570. **a dear father murder'd** Johnson, a deere murthered Q_2 | the Deere murthered F_1F_2.

and terms of insult, and belabouring him with extreme provocation, and then rubbing it in, so that the not resenting it would stamp him as the most hopeless of cowards. So in *Richard II*, I, i, 124–125, when Norfolk would drive home his charge upon Bolingbroke with the utmost force, he exclaims: "As low as to thy heart, Through the false passage of thy throat, thou liest."

562. **'Swounds**: by God's wounds. Another Elizabethan oath.

563. The popular notion that the gentleness of pigeons was due to their secreting no gall, the physical cause of courage (cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, I, iii, 237) and rancour, is found in Drayton and other Elizabethan writers. Cf. Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors*, III, iii.

565. **region kites**: kites of the air. Cf. line 475.

567. **kindless**: unnatural. See note, I, ii, 65. Hamlet checks himself in this strain of objurgation, and then, in mere shame of what he has just done, turns to ranting at himself for having ranted.

570. With the Folio omission of 'father' compare such an expression as "the dear departed."

571. By all the best and worst passions of my nature.

And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon 't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I 'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle: I 'll observe his looks;
I 'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil; and the devil hath power
T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. I 'll have grounds
More relative than this. The play 's the thing
Wherein I 'll catch the conscience of the king. [*Exit*]

574. **scullion** Ff | stallyon Q_2.
575. **brain** | Braine F_1F_2 | braines Q_2.—**I** Ff | Hum, I Q_2 Camb.
584. **he but** Ff | a doe Q_2.
586. **the devil . . . the devil** | a deale . . . the deale Q_2.

575. **About**: to work! Cf. the expression 'go about' a thing.

584. **tent**: probe (as a wound). — **blench**: flinch (used of the eyes).

590. **Abuses**: deceives. Coleridge quotes the following from Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, I, xxxvii: "I believe . . . that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not the wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of Devils, prompting and suggesting us unto mischief, blood, and villainy; instilling and stealing into our hearts that the blessed Spirits are not at rest in their graves, but wander sollicitous of the affairs of the World."

591. **relative**: closely related, conclusive. "To the purpose."— Clar.

ACT III

Scene I. *A room in the castle.*

Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, *and* Guildenstern

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Rosencrantz. He does confess he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guildenstern. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Rosencrantz. Most like a gentleman.

Guildenstern. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Rosencrantz. Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

ACT III. Scene I Q(1676) Rowe | Ff omit.—*A . . . castle* Malone.—Rosencrantz, *and* Guildenstern Capell | Rosincrance, Guildenstern, and Lords Ff.
1. circumstance Ff | conference Q_2.

1. **drift of circumstance**: course of roundabout inquiry. Cf. 'drift,' II, i, 10; 'circumstance,' I, v, 127; *Troilus and Cressida*, III, iii, 113, 114.

13–14. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, Warburton's transposition of 'niggard' and 'most free' was adopted. "Sparing

QUEEN. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

ROSENCRANTZ. Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way; of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it. They are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

POLONIUS. 'T is most true;
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

KING. With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclin'd.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

ROSENCRANTZ. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN]

KING. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 't were by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia.
Her father and myself, lawful espials,

17. **o'er-raught** | ore-raught Q_2 | ore-wrought F_1F_2 | o're-took F_3F_4.
25-27. Pope's arrangement | In Ff lines end **gentlemen, on, delights.**
28. [*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN] Ff omit.
30. **here** | heere Q_2 | there Ff.
31-32. One line in Ff.

of speech when questioned, but of demands respecting ourselves he was very free in return." — Clar. Probably the courtiers are intentionally misrepresenting their interview with Hamlet.

17. **o'er-raught**: over-reached, overtook.
29. **closely**: secretly. Cf. *King John*, IV, i, 133.
31. **Affront**: confront, meet. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, V, i, 75.
32. **espials**: spies. Cf. *1 Henry VI*, I, iv, 8; IV, iii, 6.

Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If 't be th' affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN. I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

OPHELIA. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit* QUEEN]

POLONIUS. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [*To* OPHELIA] Read on this book;
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this —
'T is too much prov'd — that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

KING. [*Aside*] O, 't is too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,

42. [*Exit* QUEEN] Theobald.
43. please you Q_2 | please ye Ff.
44. [*To* OPHELIA] Johnson.
48. **sugar** Q_2 | surge Ff.
49. [*Aside*] Capell | Ff omit. —
't is too Q_2 | 't is Ff.

39–40. **beauties . . . virtues**. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare was adopted S. Walker's proposed emendation 'beauty' and 'virtue.' This reading is defended by Furness.

43. **Gracious**. This is addressed to the king. "Compare 'High and mighty,' IV, vii, 43, and the Dedication to *Venus and Adonis*." — Elze.

45. **exercise**: act of devotion. Cf. *Richard III*, III, vii, 64.

Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burden!

POLONIUS. I hear him coming; let 's withdraw, my lord.
[*Exeunt* KING *and* POLONIUS]

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET. To be, or not to be, — that is the question;
Whether 't is nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die, — to sleep, —
No more; and by a sleep to say we end

55. let 's Ff|Q_2 omits.—[*Exeunt* ... Capell | Exeunt Ff.
56. Scene II Pope.
59. a sea of | a siege of Theobald conj. | th' assay of (a' say of) Theobald conj. | assailing Hanmer conj. | assail of Warburton | assays of Keightley conj. | the seat of Bailey conj.

52. **to**: as compared with. Cf. I, ii, 140.

56. **To be, or not to be.** Johnson's interpretation of these lines as a reference to a future life, and Malone's suggestion that Hamlet is here meditating whether he should commit suicide, lose sight of the obvious expansion of the question in the words which immediately follow. "Is my present project of active resistance against wrong to be, or not to be? Hamlet anticipates his own death as a probable consequence." — Dowden. A soliloquy has naturally less of formal continuity in the expression than a speech in a dialogue, and in this famous soliloquy the meaning is to be gathered from a series of ejaculations that have the effect of interjections expressing deep emotion.

59. The feeling that this line contains a badly mixed metaphor has led to the suggested emendations given in the textual notes. Apart from the well-known tradition that the Celts were in the habit of having armed combats with the ocean waves, the common use of 'sea' as equivalent to 'host' (cf. 'sea of care,' *Lucrece*, line 1100; 'sea of joys,' *Pericles*, V, i, 194) would justify its use here.

The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, — 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, — to sleep, —
To sleep! perchance to dream! ay, there 's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffl'd off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there 's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,

63. to, Globe Camb | to. — Delius | to; Q_2 | too? F_1 | to? F_2F_3 | to. F_4.
71. proud Q_5Q_6 | proude $Q_2Q_3Q_4$ | poore F_1F_2 | poor F_3F_4 Rowe.
72. pangs Q_2Ff | pang Pope Theobald Johnson. — dispriz'd Ff | disprized Furness despiz'd Q_2 | despised Globe Camb | despis'd Delius.

65. **rub**: obstacle. A technical term in bowling. Cf. *Henry V*, II, ii, 188; V, ii, 33; *Richard II*, III, iv, 4; *King John*, III, iv, 122.

67. **mortal coil**: "the bustle or turmoil of this mortal life." — Murray. The best commentary is in Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, lines 52–53:

the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world.

The fact that Shakespeare never uses 'coil' in the modern sense is against the interpretation that 'mortal coil' means 'the body encircling the soul,' or 'the muddy vesture of decay grossly closing it in' (*The Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 64).

68 69. **respect That makes calamity of so long life**: consideration that makes calamity so long-lived.

70–74. For the general spirit of these lines cf. *Sonnets*, LXVI.

72. **dispriz'd**: unappreciated, undervalued. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, v, 74. As Furness indicates, a love that is 'dispriz'd' is more frequent and more hopeless in its misery than one that is 'despis'd' (see Quarto reading adopted by Globe and Camb).

When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would these fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;

76. **who would these** Ff Delius | who would Q_2 Globe Camb. 79. **The undiscover'd** Q_2 Globe Camb Delius | The undiscouered Ff | That undiscover'd Pope. — **bourn** Capell | borne Q_2F_1.

75. **quietus**: quittance. A law term for a debt settlement.

76. **bare**: unsheathed. But the meaning may be 'mere,' as in *Richard II*, I, iii, 297. — **bodkin**: dagger. The original form was 'boydekin,' 'boidekyn,' in three syllables. Chaucer in describing the death of Cæsar, *The Monkes Tale*, line 719, has "And stikede him with boydekins anoon." — **fardels**: burdens. Properly 'bundles,' 'parcels.' Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 727, etc. In the Genevan New Testament, *Acts*, xxi, 15, reads: "We trussed up our fardeles and went up to Ierusalem." Grant White and Corson agree that the Quarto omission of 'these' before 'fardels' misses the essential thought, which is a summing up of miseries, not an addition to them.

79. **bourn**: boundary. Cf. *The Tempest*, II, i, 152; *King Lear*, IV, vi, 57. Murray and Skeat recognize this as etymologically distinct from 'bourn' ('burn') meaning a 'stream,' as in *King Lear*, III, vi, 27: "Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me."

80. **No traveller returns.** Hamlet means that no one comes back to the state of mortal life, or, as Coleridge says, "no traveller returns to this world, as to his home, or abiding-place," thus answering Theobald's famous question, "Then how about the Ghost?"

83. Against the interpretation that 'conscience' here means only 'consciousness' (of such risks) or 'exercise of conscious thought,' common meanings in Middle English, may be cited *Richard III*, I, iv, 130–138: "Conscience . . . is a dangerous thing; it makes a man a coward."

And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

OPHELIA. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?

HAMLET. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

OPHELIA. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

HAMLET. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA. My honour'd lord, I know right well you did;
And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

86. **pith** Ff Delius Furness | pitch $Q_2Q_3Q_4Q_5Q_6$ Globe Camb.
87. **awry** Qq | away Ff.
92. **you; well, well, well** Ff Globe Camb Delius | you well Q_2.
95. **you, now** Theobald Globe Delius | you now Q_2F_4 | you now, $F_1F_2F_3$.
97. **I know** Ff Furness | you know Q_2 Globe Camb Delius.
99. **the things** Ff | these things Q_2. — **their perfume lost** Q_2 | then perfume left $F_1F_2F_3$ | than perfume left F_4.

85. **thought**: melancholy brooding. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 187.

86. **pith**. The Quartos read 'pitch,' i.e. 'height,' as of a falcon's soaring; but such Shakespearian expressions as 'pith and marrow' (I, iv, 22), 'pith and puissance' (*Henry V*, Chorus-prologue, III, 21) support the reading of the Folios.

HAMLET. Ha, ha! are you honest?

OPHELIA. My lord!

HAMLET. Are you fair? 105

OPHELIA. What means your lordship?

HAMLET. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

OPHELIA. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty? 110

HAMLET. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once. 115

OPHELIA. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET. You should not have believ'd me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it; I lov'd you not.

110. **with** Q_2 | your Ff.

103. **honest.** A common meaning in Shakespeare is 'chaste.' Here the word probably connotes both truthfulness and chastity. Similarly, in line 105, 'fair' may be understood as covering both beauty and straightforwardness.

105. Coleridge's comment upon this is illuminating:

> Here it is evident that the penetrating Hamlet perceives, from the strange and forced manner of Ophelia, that the sweet girl was not acting a part of her own, but was a decoy: and his after-speeches are not so much directed to her as to the listeners and spies. Such a discovery in a mood so anxious and irritable accounts for a certain harshness in him; and yet a wild up-working of love, sporting with opposites in a wilful, self-tormenting strain of irony, is perceptible throughout.

108. **admit no discourse to**: permit no one to parley with.

109. **commerce**: intercourse. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, III, iv, 191.

118. Cannot so graft love in (purify) our old evil nature but that we shall still have a strong flavor of our native badness.

OPHELIA. I was the more deceiv'd. 120

HAMLET. Get thee to a nunnery; why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where 's your father? 130

OPHELIA. At home, my lord.

HAMLET. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA. O, help him, you sweet heavens! 134

HAMLET. If thou dost marry, I 'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go; farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for

128. heaven and earth Q_1Ff Camb | earth and heauen Q_2 Globe.
133. no where Q_2 ! no way Ff.
134, 141. [*Aside*] Furness.

122. **indifferent**: tolerably, fairly. Cf. II, ii, 226.

131. Throughout the latter part of this scene, Hamlet's excitement runs to a very high pitch, and he seems to take an insane delight in lacerating the gentle creature before him. Yet what keenness and volubility of wit! what energy and swiftness of discourse! the intellectual forces in a fiery gallop, while the social feelings seem totally benumbed. And when Ophelia meets his question, "Where 's your father?" with the reply, "At home, my lord," how quickly he darts upon the true meaning of her presence! The innocent girl, who knows not how to word an untruth, becomes embarrassed in her part, and from her manner Hamlet instantly gathers what is on foot and forthwith shapes his speech so as to sting the eavesdroppers.

wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

OPHELIA. O heavenly powers, restore him!

HAMLET. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I 'll no more on 't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [*Exit*]

OPHELIA. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;
Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th' observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,

142. **paintings** Q_1Q_2 | pratlings F_1 | pratling $F_2F_3F_4$ | painting Pope.
143. **has** Ff | hath Q_2. — **face** Q_2 | pace Ff.
151. **soldier's, scholar's** Q_2Ff | scholler, souldier Q_1.
155. **And I** Q_2 | Haue I F_1F_2 | I am F_3F_4.

142. **your.** Used indefinitely. Hamlet in these speeches refers, not to Ophelia personally, but to women generally.

145. "You mistake by *wanton* affectation, and pretend to mistake by *ignorance*." — Johnson. "You use ambiguous words, as if you did not know their meaning." — Moberly.

151. Hanmer adopted the arrangement of the First Quarto and read "courtier's, scholar's, soldier's," making the words correspond respectively to "eye, tongue, sword."

153. Cf. *2 Henry IV*, II, iii, 20–32:

> he was indeed the glass
> Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves ...
> He was the mark and glass, copy and book,
> That fashion'd others.

That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me,
T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter KING *and* POLONIUS

KING. Love! his affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There 's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger; which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute.
Haply the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on 't?

POLONIUS. It shall do well; but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please,

158. jangled out Ff | jangled, out Capell Globe Delius. — tune Ff | time Q_2.
162. Scene III Pope.
167. for to Q_2 | to F_1F_2.

166. disclose: chipping of the shell. Cf. V, i, 276.

But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief: let her be round with him;
And I 'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

KING. It shall be so;
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle*

Enter HAMLET *and* PLAYERS

HAMLET. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split

183. **grief** | griefe Q_2 | Greefes F_1.
3. **your** Ff | our Q_2. — **spoke** Q_2 | had spoke Ff.
4. **much with** Q_2 | much Ff.
8. **hear** Q_2 | see Ff.
9. **tatters** Ff | totters Q_2.

183. **round**: direct, straightforward. See note, II, ii, 139.

1. "This dialogue of Hamlet with the players," says Coleridge, "is one of the happiest instances of Shakespeare's power of diversifying the scene while he is carrying on the plot."

8–9. **robustious**: boisterous. Cf. *Henry V*, III, vii, 159. — **periwig-pated**. Cf. *Every Woman in Her Humour* (1609): "As none wear hoods but monks and ladies . . . none periwigs but players."

the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'erdoing Termagant: it out-herods Herod; pray you, avoid it. 13

1 PLAYER. I warrant your honour.

HAMLET. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful

12. would Q_2 | could Ff.

10. **groundlings**: the crowd in the 'yard.' The yard, or pit, was the cheapest part of the Elizabethan theatre; it had neither seats nor flooring, and the audience there stood literally on the ground. Cf. Ben Jonson's Induction, *Bartholomew Fair*: "the understanding gentlemen o' the ground here asked my judgment."

12. **Termagant**. The name given in old romances to an imaginary god of the Saracens. He is usually joined with Mahound, or Mahomet. Cf. the Sultan's words in *Guy of Warwick*:

> So help me Mahoun of might
> And Termagaunt my god so bright.

Florio calls him "*Termigisto*, a great boaster, quarreller, killer, tamer, or ruler of the universe; the child of the earthquake and of the thunder, the brother of death."

13. **Herod**. In such miracle plays as *The Slaughter of the Innocents*, Herod is introduced as a blustering braggart. In the Coventry play of *The Nativity*, one of his ranting speeches is followed by the stage direction, "Here Erode ragis in thys pagond and in the strete also."

22. **his**: its. — **pressure**: impress. Cf. I, v, 100.

23. **come tardy off**: feebly performed. Cf. 'hanging fire.'

laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellow'd that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. 32

1 PLAYER. I hope we have reform'd that indifferently with us, sir.

HAMLET. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be consider'd: that 's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. 41

[*Exeunt* PLAYERS]

25. **o'erweigh** | ore-weigh Q_2 | o're-way F_1 | ore-sway $F_2F_3F_4$. 29. **nor man** Q_2 | or Norman Ff | nor Turke Q_1.

32. **abominably**. The old spelling 'abhominably,' and the popular derivation from *ab homine* (see Murray), make clear the humorous opposition to 'humanity.' Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, i, 26.

41. After "uses it" the First Quarto gives the passage quoted below, which Collier suggests may have been levelled at the impertinent "extemporal wit" of the famous comic actor Will Kempe, who in 1599 left the company to which Shakespeare belonged. The return of Kempe to the company may account for the omission of these lines from the later Quartos and the First Folio:

> And then you have some again, that keeps one suit
> Of jests, as a man is known by one suit of
> Apparell, and gentlemen quotes his jests down

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

POLONIUS. And the queen too, and that presently.

HAMLET. Bid the players make haste. [*Exit* POLONIUS]

Will you two help to hasten them?

ROSENCRANTZ. } We will, my lord.
GUILDENSTERN. }

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN]

HAMLET. What, ho, Horatio!

Enter HORATIO

HORATIO. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAMLET. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

HORATIO. O, my dear lord, —

HAMLET. Nay, do not think I flatter,
For what advancement may I hope from thee
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits

42. Scene IV Warburton. 47. Scene V Pope.

> In their tables, before they come to the play, as thus:
> 'Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge?' and, 'You owe me
> A quarter's wages'; and, 'My coat wants a cullison'[1];
> And, 'Your beer is sour'; and blabbering with his lips,
> And thus keeping in his cinque-pace of jests,
> When, God knows, the warm clown cannot make a jest
> Unless by chance, as the blind man catcheth a hare;
> Masters! tell him of it.

50. As ever I have had intercourse with.

53. revenue. Accented on the second syllable. This, the common but not universal pronunciation in Shakespeare, is etymologically correct and until recently was sanctioned by legal and parliamentary usage. See Murray.

[1] a badge. A corruption of 'cognizance.'

To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingl'd,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee. Something too much of this.
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt

55. **tongue lick** Q_4 | tongue licke Q_2 | tongue, like Ff.
57. **fawning** | fauning Q_2 | faining $F_1F_2F_3$ | feigning F_4.
58. **her** Q_2 | my Ff.
63. **Hast** Q_2 | Hath Ff.
74. **thy** Q_2 | my Ff.
75. **my** Q_2 | mine Ff.

55. **candied**: sugared, steeped in the sweetness of adulation.
56. **pregnant**: ready, prompt. "Because untold thrift is born from a cunning use of the knee." — Furness.
57. **thrift**: profit, gain, the gold that flatterers lie for.
64. **blood**: natural impulse. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, I, ii, 19–20.
74. "With the most inward and sagacious criticism." — Dowden.

Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

HORATIO. Well, my lord;
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and other* Lords *attendant, with the Guard carrying torches*

HAMLET. They are coming to the play; I must be idle. Get you a place.

KING. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-cramm'd; you cannot feed capons so.

79. **stithy** Q_2 | Stythe F_1.
82. **In** Q_2 | To Ff.
85. Scene VI Pope | Scene V Warburton.

76. **one speech**. Either (1) Hamlet's "speech of some dozen or sixteen lines," II, ii, 527; or (2) a single exclamation by the king.

79. **stithy**: blacksmith's shop. 'Stithy' properly means 'anvil.'

85. **idle**. While this may mean only 'purposeless,' 'intent upon nothing in particular,' it should probably be interpreted as 'crazy.' In Hall's *Chronicles* occurs "ydle and weak in his wit." This interpretation would prove that Hamlet was acting a part.

88 89. The chameleon was supposed to live on air. Cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, i, 178–179. In *Vulgar Errors*, iii, 21, Sir Thomas Browne deals seriously and at considerable length with this popular belief. The king snuffs offence in Hamlet's words as implying that he has not kept his promise to him. Cf. I, ii, 64, 108–112.

KING. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

HAMLET. No, nor mine now. [*To* POLONIUS] My lord, you play'd once i' th' university, you say?

POLONIUS. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

HAMLET. And what did you enact?

POLONIUS. I did enact Julius Cæsar; I was kill'd i' th' Capitol; Brutus kill'd me.

HAMLET. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

ROSENCRANTZ. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

QUEEN. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET. No, good mother, here 's metal more attractive.

[*Lying down at* OPHELIA'S *feet*]

POLONIUS. [*To the* KING] O, ho! do you mark that?

OPHELIA. You are merry, my lord.

HAMLET. Who, I?

OPHELIA. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within 's two hours.

OPHELIA. Nay, 't is twice two months, my lord.

94. **did I** Q_2 | I did Ff.
96. **And what** Ff | What Q_2.
99. **brute** | bruite F_1F_2.
102. **dear** Q_2 | good Ff.

93. A Latin play on Cæsar's death was acted at Oxford, in 1582, for which Dr. Eedes, of Christ Church, wrote the prologue.

97–98. Here and in *Julius Cæsar*, III, i, 12, etc., Shakespeare followed the popular tradition, supported by Chaucer in *The Monkes Tale*, which transferred the assassination from the *Curia Pompeiana* to the Capitol. Cf. also *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, vi, 12–19.

110. **within 's**: within this. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, V, ii, 24.

HAMLET. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I 'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there 's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year; but, by 'r lady, he must build churches then, or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is, 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.' 118

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters

Enter a KING *and* QUEEN *very lovingly; the* QUEEN *embracing him. She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck; lays him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the* KING'S *ears, and exit. The* QUEEN *returns, finds the* KING *dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner,*

113. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, 'sabell' (Fr. *couleur d'isabelle*), in the sense of 'flame-colour,' was the reading adopted here. 'Sables' were rich furs, not mourning. "Hamlet's jest lies in the ambiguity of the word; sables, the fur, and sable, the black of heraldry." – Dowden. In IV, vii, 79, sables are described as the livery of "settl'd age."

118. "The hobby-horse is forgot" is a proverbial expression to signify the passing of the good old times. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, III, i, 30. The 'hobby horse' was a prominent figure in the morris-dances and May-games (see Murray), and Puritan opposition to these merrymakings is often satirized in old songs and dramas.

The dumb-show enters. In *Gorboduc* and many early court plays 'dumb-show' was introduced to symbolize the action that was to follow. Shakespeare's use of it here to represent the action briefly but directly is unusual. As the king is in no way surprised by this dumb-show, it may be supposed that his attention is so engaged with those about him that he does not mark it.

with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner wooes the QUEEN *with gifts; she seems loth and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love*

[*Exeunt*]

OPHELIA. What means this, my lord?

HAMLET. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief. 121

OPHELIA. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter PROLOGUE

HAMLET. We shall know by this fellow. The players cannot keep counsel; they 'll tell all.

OPHELIA. Will he tell us what this show meant? 125

HAMLET. Ay, or any show that you 'll show him; be not you asham'd to show, he 'll not shame to tell you what it means.

OPHELIA. You are naught, you are naught. I'll mark the play.

PROLOGUE. For us, and for our tragedy, 130
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently. [*Exit*]

HAMLET. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA. 'T is brief, my lord.

HAMLET. As woman's love. 135

119. Scene VII Pope | Scene VI Warburton.
120. miching mallecho Malone | munching Mallico Q_2 | Miching Malicho Ff. — it Q_2 | that Ff.
125. he Pope | a Q_2 | they Ff.

120. **miching mallecho**: sneaking mischief. See Murray.

128. **naught**: bad. This, the adjective, often found in Shakespeare, was originally the substantive, used predicatively.

133. **posy**: motto. Of course, as such it implied brevity.

Enter two PLAYERS, KING *and* QUEEN

PLAYER KING. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

PLAYER QUEEN. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me! you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must;
For women's fear and love holds quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know:
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so:
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

PLAYER KING. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,

145. **your** Ff | our Q_2.
150. **love** Ff | Lord Q_2.
152, 153. As in Q_2 | Ff omit.
155. **their** Q_2 | my Ff.

136. **cart**: chariot. "The style of the interlude here is distinguished from the real dialogue by rhyme, as in the first interview with the players by epic verse." — Coleridge.

146. **distrust**: have fears for, am anxious about.

148. **holds quantity**: are in proportion. This is the reading of the Folios. The Quartos have:

> For women fear too much, even as they love,
> And women's fear and love hold quantity.

155. **operant**: active, operative. — **leave**: cease.

Honour'd, belov'd; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou —

PLAYER QUEEN. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast;
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAMLET. [*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.

PLAYER QUEEN. The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.
A second time I kill my husband dead
When second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING. I do believe you think what now you speak,
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity;
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.
Most necessary 't is that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt;
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy:
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;

167. **you think** Q_2 | you. Think Ff. 171. **like** Ff | the Q_2. — **fruit** | fruits Pope. 177. **either** | eyther Q_2 | **other** Ff. 178. **enactures** Q_6 | ennactures Q_2 | enactors Ff.

163. **instances**: motives, inducements. Cf. *Henry V*, II, ii, 119.
164. **respects of thrift**: considerations of interest. Cf. III, i, 68.
171–172. For grammatical construction, see Abbott, § 415.
173–174. "Our resolves are debts to ourselves; why embarrass ourselves by inconvenient payments." — Dowden.
178. **enactures**: enactments. 'Resolutions.' — Johnson.

Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 't is not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 't is a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies:
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies:
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.
So think thou wilt no second husband wed:
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAMLET. If she should break it now!

185. favourite Q_2 | fauourites F_1. 197. to me give Q_2 to giue me Ff. 199, 200. To desperation . . . my scope Q_2 | Ff omit. — An anchor's Theobald | And Anchors Q_2. — cheer | chair Steevens conj.

194. We can control our thoughts but not their results.

200. anchor's cheer: anchorite's (hermit's) fare. Dowden favors interpreting 'cheer' as 'chair.'

201. opposite that blanks: contrary thing that blanches.

PLAYER KING. 'T is deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps*]
PLAYER QUEEN. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain! [*Exit*]

HAMLET. Madam, how like you this play? 210
QUEEN. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.
HAMLET. O, but she 'll keep her word.
KING. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in 't?
HAMLET. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' th' world. 216
KING. What do you call the play?
HAMLET. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista. You shall see anon; 't is a knavish piece of work, but what o' that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the gall'd jade wince, our withers are unwrung. 223

211. **doth protest** Q_2 | protests Ff. 223. **wince** Q_1 | winch Q_2Ff.

218. **Tropically**: figuratively. The First Quarto has 'trapically,' which suggests that a pun is intended.

219–220. The First Quarto has 'Albertus' for 'Gonzago,' and 'Duke' and 'Duchess' everywhere for 'king' and 'queen.' It is a matter of history that in 1538 the Duke of Urbano, married to a Gonzaga, was murdered by Luigi Gonzaga, who poured a poisoned lotion in his ears.

222–223. **Let the gall'd jade wince.** A proverbial expression found in Heywood's *Proverbs*, Edwardes's *Damon and Pithias*, Lyly's *Mother Bombie*, *Euphues*, etc. — **our withers are unwrung**: there is no sore on our shoulders.

Enter LUCIANUS

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

OPHELIA. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

HAMLET. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

OPHELIA. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAMLET. Begin, murderer; pox! leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: 'The croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

LUCIANUS. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing.
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property
On wholesome life usurp immediately.
[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears*]

HAMLET. He poisons him i' th' garden for 's estate. His name 's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in choice

225. as good as a Q_2 | a good Ff.

225. One function of the chorus in the Elizabethan drama, as in *Henry V*, was to explain the action of the play, or of the dumb show. An interpreter usually explained the movements at a puppet show.

230–231. Undoubtedly a line from an old play. In *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third* occurs:

The screeking raven sits croking for revenge,
Whole herds of beasts come bellowing for revenge.

233. No creature but time looking on, and time a confederate in the act, or conspiring with the murderer.

235. 'Hecate' is properly trisyllabic, but Shakespeare always has it dissyllabic, except in *1 Henry VI*, III, ii, 64. The 'ban' of Hecate was supposed to bring poison to its highest intensity.

Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPHELIA. The king rises!

HAMLET. What, frighted with false fire!

QUEEN. How fares my lord?

POLONIUS. Give o'er the play.

KING. Give me some light! Away!

ALL. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but* HAMLET *and* HORATIO]

HAMLET. Why, let the strucken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch while some must sleep:
So runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers — if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me — with two Provincial roses on my raz'd shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

243. Q2 omits.
248. Scene VIII Pope | Scene VII Warburton. — **strucken** Ff Delius | strooken Q2 | stricken Q1 Globe Camb.
251. **So** Ff | Thus Q2.

248–251. "In all probability a quotation from some ballad." — Dyce. The popular belief that the deer, when badly wounded, retires from the herd and goes apart to weep and die, finds expression also in *As You Like It*, II, i, 33–40. Cf. Cowper, *The Task*, III, 108–111.

252. **forest of feathers**. There are many contemporary allusions to the gaudy apparel of Elizabethan players and particularly to their habit of wearing flaunting plumes. So in Chapman's *Monsieur d'Olive*: "I carry a whole forest of feathers with me."

253. **turn Turk**: go wholly to the bad. — **Provincial roses**. The reference is to rosettes of ribbon, like the roses of Provins, near Paris, or the famous double damask roses of Provence.

254. **raz'd**: slashed, streaked in patterns. — **fellowship in a cry**: partnership in a company. This sense of 'cry' is borrowed from the chase. "A kennell or crie of hounds." — Cotgrave.

HORATIO. Half a share.

HAMLET. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantl'd was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very — pajock.

HORATIO. You might have rhym'd.

HAMLET. O good Horatio, I 'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HORATIO. Very well, my lord.

HAMLET. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO. I did very well note him.

HAMLET. Ah, ha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!

261. **pajock** F_3F_4 | paiock Q_2 | Paiocke F_1.

255. Elizabethan players were paid not by salaries, but by shares, or portions, of the profits.

257–259. Hamlet calls Horatio Damon in allusion to the famous friendship of Damon and Pythias. His meaning is that Denmark was robbed of a king who had the majesty of Jove. Cf. III, iv, 56.

260. **pajock**. While this is probably a dialect form of 'peacock,' humorously substituted for 'ass,' it is noteworthy, as Murray points out, that the spelling 'peacock' or 'peacocke' is found in the First Folio in the five other places where the word occurs. Skeat says that 'pajock' is the word 'patchock' (a diminutive form of 'patch,' meaning 'clown') used by Spenser in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. Cf. III, iv, 100. 'Peacock' gives the most satisfactory meaning in view of the evil reputation of the bird, its showy appearance, the fable of the birds choosing it as king instead of the eagle, and that of the crow dressed in peacock feathers.

267–268. The 'recorder' was a kind of flageolet. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, I, 549–551:

Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders.

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why, then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN

GUILDENSTERN. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAMLET. Sir, a whole history.

GUILDENSTERN. The king, sir, —

HAMLET. Ay, sir, what of him?

GUILDENSTERN. Is in his retirement marvellous distemper'd.

HAMLET. With drink, sir?

GUILDENSTERN. No, my lord, rather with choler.

HAMLET. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

GUILDENSTERN. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAMLET. I am tame, sir; pronounce.

GUILDENSTERN. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAMLET. You are welcome.

GUILDENSTERN. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment; if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

272. *Re-enter* . . . | Enter . . . Ff, after line 266.

270. **perdy**. A corruption of *par Dieu*. Cf. *Henry V*, II, i, 52.

283. 'Purgation' was used in a legal and an ecclesiastical as well as in a medical sense. Cf. *As You Like It*, V, iv, 45.

HAMLET. Sir, I cannot.

GUILDENSTERN. What, my lord?

HAMLET. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseas'd: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter. My mother, you say,—

ROSENCRANTZ. Then thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAMLET. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

ROSENCRANTZ. She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you go to bed.

HAMLET. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

ROSENCRANTZ. My lord, you once did love me.

HAMLET. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

ROSENCRANTZ. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAMLET. Sir, I lack advancement.

ROSENCRANTZ. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

301. **struck** F_4 | strooke Q_2 | stroke $F_1F_2F_3$ | strook Capell.
304. **Impart** Q_2 | Ff omit.
310. **So I** Ff | And Q_2.
312. **surely bar the door upon** Q_2 | freely bar the door of Ff.

301. **admiration**: wonder, amazement. Cf. I, ii, 192.

310. **So I do still.** Here 'so' is emphatic and strongly ironical. — **pickers and stealers**: hands. "To keep my hands from picking and stealing." — Church Catechism. A mild oath 'by this hand' is found in *The Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 161, and in *As You Like It*, IV, i, 111.

HAMLET. Ay, sir, but, 'While the grass grows,' — the proverb is something musty.

Re-enter PLAYERS *with recorders*

O, the recorders! let me see one. — To withdraw with you: — why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil? 321

GUILDENSTERN. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

HAMLET. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe? 325

GUILDENSTERN. My lord, I cannot.

HAMLET. I pray you.

GUILDENSTERN. Believe me, I cannot.

HAMLET. I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN. I know no touch of it, my lord. 330

HAMLET. 'T is as easy as lying. Govern these ventages

317. **sir** Q_2 | Ff omit.
319. *Re-enter* . . . | Enter one with a Recorder Ff. — **recorders** Q_2 | Recorder Ff. — **one** Q_2 | Ff omit.
331. **'T is** Ff | It is Q_2. — **ventages** Q_2 | Ventiges Ff.

317. The proverb is in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices:*

> To whom of old this proverb well it serves,
> While grass doth grow, the silly horse he sterves.

319. **To withdraw with you**: let me speak a word with you in private. Hamlet addresses Guildenstern. This is a natural interpretation of a much-disputed passage.

320. **recover the wind**: get to the windward side. A hunting term.

321. **toil**: net, snare, trap.

322–323. If I am using an unmannerly boldness with you, it is my love that makes me do so. This seems to be the meaning, but so incoherent is the apology that Hamlet is justified in saying, "I do not well understand that."

331. **ventages**: holes of the pipe. So 'stops,' line 334, probably refers to the mode of stopping the ventages to make the notes.

with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

HAMLET. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me: you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be play'd on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Re-enter POLONIUS

God bless you, sir!

POLONIUS. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

HAMLET. Do you see yonder cloud that 's almost in shape of a camel?

POLONIUS. By th' mass, and 't is like a camel, indeed.

HAMLET. Methinks it is like a weasel.

332. **fingers** Q_2 | finger Ff. — **and thumb** F_4 | and thumbe $F_1F_2F_3$ | & the umber Q_2Q_3.

333. **eloquent** Q_2 | excellent Ff.

342. **speak** Q_2 | Ff omit. — 'Sblood | s'blood Q_2 | Why Ft.

343. **I** Q_2 | that I Ff.

344. **can fret me** Q_1Ff | fret me not Q_2. — **you** Q_2Ff Delius | yet you Q_1 Globe Camb.

349. **yonder** Q_2 | that Ff.

351. **By th' mass** | By 'th masse Q_2 | By 'th' Misse F_1F_2. — **'t is like** | 't is, like Q_2 | it 's like Ff.

344. **fret**. The word is used punningly. In musical instruments, like the guitar, the 'fret' is a bar or ridge of wood, metal, etc. (formerly, according to Stainer, a ring of gut), "placed on the finger-board, to regulate the fingering." — Murray.

POLONIUS. It is back'd like a weasel.

HAMLET. Or like a whale?

POLONIUS. Very like a whale.

HAMLET. Then will I come to my mother by and by. [*Aside*] They fool me to the top of my bent. — I will come by and by.

POLONIUS. I will say so. [*Exit* POLONIUS]

HAMLET. 'By and by' is easily said. Leave me, friends. [*Exeunt all but* HAMLET]

'T is now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none;

357. [*Aside*] Staunton | Q_2Ff omit.
360. [*Exeunt* . . . | Q_2Ff omit.
362. breathes F_3F_4 | breaths F_1F_2 | breakes $Q_2Q_3Q_4$.
364. bitter . . . day Ff | busines as the bitter day Q_2.
366. lose Q_6 | loose Q_2Ff.
369. daggers Ff | dagger Q_2.

356. **by and by.** Here the meaning is probably 'immediately,' as in *Luke*, xxi, 9. Many words ('presently,' 'directly,' etc.), meaning originally 'without delay,' came to mean 'after a while.'

357. **top of my bent**: full extent of my inclination. See note, II, ii, 30. Polonius has been using the method, common in the treatment of insane people, of assenting to all that Hamlet says. This is what Hamlet refers to.

367. Nero murdered his mother, Agrippina. As Claudius is the name of the king, it is interesting to note that after the death of her husband, Domitius, Agrippina married her uncle, the Emperor Claudius.

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent! [*Exit*]

SCENE III. *A room in the castle*

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN

KING. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you.
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you.
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

GUILDENSTERN. We will ourselves provide:
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your majesty.

ROSENCRANTZ. The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armour of the mind
To keep itself from noyance, but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests
The lives of many. The cease of majesty

371. soever Q_6 | someuer Q_2Ff. SCENE III, Scene IX Pope; Scene VIII Warburton. — *A room in the castle* | Q_2Ff omit.
6. **dangerous** Ff | near us Q (1676) Globe Camb | near's Q_2.
7. **lunacies** Ff | browes Q_2.
14. **weal** | weale Q_2 | spirit Ff.

371. **shent**: rebuked. Cf. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I, iv, 38.
372. **give them seals**: confirm with deeds. Cf. *Coriolanus*, II, iii, 115.
13. **noyance**: injury. An aphetic form of 'annoyance.'
15. **The cease of majesty**: the king dying.

Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
What 's near it with it. It is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

KING. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

ROSENCRANTZ.
GUILDENSTERN. } We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN]

Enter POLONIUS

POLONIUS. My lord, he 's going to his mother's closet.
Behind the arras I 'll convey myself,
To hear the process; I 'll warrant she 'll tax him home:
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'T is meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege;

33. **speech, of** Theobald | speech of Q_2Ff.

16. **gulf**: whirlpool. Cf. *Richard III*, III, vii, 128.

29. **tax him home**: reprove him severely.

33. **of vantage**: from a place of vantage. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare the comma was omitted before 'of,' and 'speech of vantage' was interpreted as 'speech having an advantage in that natural affection makes the speakers partial to each other.' This interpretation favors the conclusion that the queen was not

I 'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

KING. Thanks, dear my lord. [*Exit* POLONIUS]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder! Pray can I not;
Though inclination be as sharp as will,
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what 's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I 'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'

privy to the murder of Hamlet's father. Both the king and Polonius seem to have some distrust of her.

36. In this speech 'offence' is used in four different senses.

37. The curse of Cain. Cf. *Genesis*, iv, 11.

39–40. 'Though I were not only willing but strongly inclined to pray, my guilt would prevent me.' The distinction here implied is philosophically just. The inclination is the craving or the impulse to assuage his pangs of remorse; the will is the determination of the reason or judgment in a question of duty and right.

43–46. Cf. *Macbeth*, II, ii, 60–61; V, i, 31, 47–48.

49–50. Either to be prevented from falling, or to be pardoned after we have fallen. An allusion to the last petition of the Lord's Prayer.

That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain th' offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 't is seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 't is not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can. What can it not?
Yet what can it when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that struggling to be free
Art more engag'd! Help, angels! Make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees, and, heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
All may be well. [*Retires and kneels*]

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I 'll do 't. And so he goes to heaven;

58. **shove by** Ff | showe by Q_2.
72. [*Retires* . . . Malone | hee kneeles Q_1 | Q_2Ff omit.
73. Scene X Pope | Scene IX Warburton.
74. **so he** Ff | so a Q_2.

57. **currents**: courses. Some read 'currents' for 'occurrents.'
61. **lies.** "Shakespeare uses the word in its legal sense." — Clar.
64. **what rests**: what remains to be done.
68. **limed**: caught, as with bird-lime. Cf. *Macbeth*, IV, ii, 34.
69. **engag'd**: entangled. — **assay**: trial. But here, as in *Henry V*, I, ii, 151, it may mean 'onset,' 'attack.'

And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd.
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May:
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'T is heavy with him; and am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No!
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent;
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't, —
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,

77. **sole** Q_2 | foule $F_1F_2F_3$ | foul F_4.
79. **O** | Oh Ff | Why Q_2.
81. **flush** Q_2 | fresh Ff.
91. **gaming, swearing** Ff Globe Delius | game a swearing Q_2 | game, a-swearing Camb.

75. would be scann'd: ought to be examined.

80. **grossly**: in an unshriven condition. The word refers to 'father.' — **full of bread.** Cf. *Ezekiel*, xvi, 49.

81. **crimes**: sins. — **flush**: "full of sap and vigor." — Clar.

83. The particular data or circumstantial detail of things from which our thought shapes its course and draws its conclusions.

88. 'Hent' properly means 'seizure,' 'grasp,' 'hold'; here it is used in the figurative sense ('that which is grasped in the mind') of 'purpose.'

93 95. Hamlet here flies off to a sort of *ideal* revenge, in order to quiet his filial feelings without violating his reason. Yet it is a very

And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit*]

KING. [*Rising*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. [*Exit*]

SCENE IV. *The* QUEEN'S *closet*

Enter QUEEN *and* POLONIUS

POLONIUS. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him;
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.
Pray you, be round with him.

97. [*Rising*] Q_2Ff omit. SCENE IV Capell | Scene II Rowe | Scene XI Pope | Scene X Warburton.

4. **silence me e'en** Ff Delius | silence me even Q_2 | sconce me even Hanmer Globe Camb.

markworthy fact that the king is taken at last in the perpetration of crimes far worse than any that Hamlet here anticipates. But that, to be sure, is Shakespeare's ordering of the matter, and perhaps should be regarded as expressing *his* sense of justice in this case, though Hamlet may well be supposed to have a presentiment that a man so bad, and so secure in his badness, will not rest where he is, but will proceed to some further exploiting in crime, in the midst of which judgment will at last overtake him.

96. 'This physic' refers to the reasons Hamlet has been giving for not striking now; a medicine that prolongs the king's sickness, but does not heal it; that is, the purpose is delayed, not abandoned.

1. **straight**: immediately. — **lay home**. Cf. III, iii, 29.

4. **silence me e'en here**: stop talking at this point. The First Quarto reads "shrowde my selfe behinde the arras."

5. **round**: direct. See note, II, ii, 139.

HAMLET. [*Within*] Mother, mother, mother!
QUEEN. I'll warrant you;
Fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming.
[POLONIUS *hides behind the arras*]

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET. Now, mother, what 's the matter?
QUEEN. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
HAMLET. Mother, you have my father much offended.
QUEEN. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.
HAMLET. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.
QUEEN. Why, how now, Hamlet!
HAMLET. What 's the matter now?
QUEEN. Have you forgot me?
HAMLET. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And — would it were not so! — you are my mother.
QUEEN. Nay, then I 'll set those to you that can speak.
HAMLET. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge:
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.
QUEEN. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!
POLONIUS. [*Behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!
HAMLET. [*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead! [*Makes a pass through the arras*]

7. [POLONIUS . . . | Q_2Ff omit.
12. a wicked Q_2 | an idle Ff.
16. And — would it were not | But would you were not Ff.
22, 24. [*Behind*] Q_2Ff omit.
23. [*Makes* . . . | Q_2Ff omit.

14. **rood**: cross of Christ. Cf. *2 Henry IV*, III, ii, 3.

POLONIUS. [*Behind*] O, I am slain! [*Falls and dies*]

QUEEN. O me! what hast thou done?

HAMLET. Nay, I know not;

Is it the king?

QUEEN. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN. As kill a king!

HAMLET. Ay, lady, 't was my word.

[*Lifts up the arras and discovers* POLONIUS]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
Leave wringing of your hands. Peace! sit you down,
And let me wring your heart: for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

HAMLET. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows

24. [*Falls* . . . | Killes Polonius Ff.
30. [*Lifts* . . . | Q_2Ff omit.
32. better Q_2 | Betters Ff.
37. braz'd Ff | brasd Q_2 | brass'd Globe Camb.
38. is Ff | be Q_2 Globe Camb.
44. sets Q_2 | makes Ff.

37. **braz'd**: made brazen, hardened like brass.
38. **proof**: armor of proof. Cf. *Macbeth*, I, ii, 54.
44. **sets a blister there**: "brands as a harlot." — Clar.

As false as dicers' oaths; O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words! heaven's face doth glow,
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

QUEEN. Ay me, what act,
That roars so loud and thunders in the index?

HAMLET. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself,

48-49. **glow, Yea** Ff | glowe Ore Q_2.
50. **tristful** Ff | heated Q_2.
52. Q_2 gives to Hamlet.
55. **this** Q_2 | his Ff.

46. **contraction**: the marriage contract. Dowden quotes from Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi*: "After his 'contraction' . . . unto the daughter of Mr. Wilson."

49–51. **solidity**: solid globe, the earth. Hamlet in his high-wrought stress of passion, kindling as he goes on, makes the fine climax, that not only the heavenly powers burn with indignation, but even the gross beings of this world are smitten with grief and horror, as if the day of judgment were at hand.

52. **index**: beginning. The 'index' was usually placed at the beginning of books. Cf. *Othello*, II, i, 203, "an index and obscure prologue." Similarly in *Richard III*, II, ii, 149; IV, iv, 85.

53. Actors have interpreted this line in various ways. Stage tradition, followed by Edwin Booth, favors two miniatures, but a miniature could not represent Hamlet's father at full length, as he is described here, and in some stage business tapestry portraits have been introduced. Salvini and Irving represented the pictures as seen only in the "mind's eye." See Furness.

54. **counterfeit presentment**. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 116.

56. **Hyperion's**. See note, I, ii, 140. — **front**: forehead.

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it 's humble,
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
Else could you not have motion; but sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,

57. **and** Q_2 | or Ff.
65. **brother** Q_2 | breath Ff.
71-76. **Sense, sure, you . . . such a difference** Q_2 | Ff omit.

58. **station**: attitude in standing. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, iii, 22; *Macbeth*, V, viii, 42.

64–65. The allusion is to the blasted ears of corn that destroyed the full and good ears in Pharaoh's dream, *Genesis*, xli, 5–7.

67. **batten**: feed ravenously, fatten. Cf. *Coriolanus*, IV, v, 35.

71. **Sense**: feeling, sensation. In the following line 'sense' has reference to the mind, rather than to the body, and might be interpreted as 'reason.' Cf. 'common sense.'

72. **motion**: impulse, desire. The meaning seems to be, Your reason must be not merely unseated, as in madness, but absolutely quenched.

74–75. **ecstasy**: insanity. Cf. II, i, 101. Sense was never so dominated by the delusions of insanity but that it still retained some power of choice.

But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was 't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire; proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

QUEEN. O Hamlet, speak no more!
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

78-81. Eyes. . . **mope** Q_2 | Ff omit.
88. **And** Q_2 | **As Ff.** — **panders Ff** | pandars Globe Camb | pardons Q_2.
89. **eyes into my very** Ff | very eyes into my Q_2.
90. **grained** Ff | greened Q_2.

77. **hoodman-blind.** "The Hoodwinke play, or hoodmanblinde, in some places called the blindmanbuf." — Baret's *Alvearie*.

81. **mope**: be dull and stupid. Cf. *The Tempest*, V, i, 230.

83. **mutine**: mutiny. The verb does not occur again in Shakespeare, but the noun 'mutines,' in the sense of 'mutineers,' 'rebels,' occurs in V, ii, 6.

84-85. There is, in the moral sense, a fire that cleanses and preserves, and there is also a fire that corrupts and destroys; and the text probably involves a verbal identification of the two.

88. **panders will**: basely ministers to appetite.

90. **grained**: ingrained, dyed in the grain, indelibly stained.

91. **leave their tinct**: part with their dye.

HAMLET. Nay, but to live
Stew'd in corruption, —
QUEEN. O, speak to me no more!
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears.
No more, sweet Hamlet!
HAMLET. A murderer and a villain;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!
QUEEN. No more!
HAMLET. A king of shreds and patches —

Enter GHOST

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?
QUEEN. Alas, he 's mad!
HAMLET. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by

93. **mine** Ff | my Q_2.
95. **tithe** | tythe Ff | kyth Q_2.
101. *Enter* ... | in Ff after line 99.
102. **your** Q_2 | you Ff.

96. **a vice of kings**: a fool of a king, a king to be laughed at. 'Vice' refers to the well-known stock character of the old moral plays, who, often as the devil's parasite and foil, supplied much of the comic element. He usually wore a motley or patchwork dress; hence the reference to 'shreds and patches' in line 100. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, IV, ii, 134; *2 Henry IV*, III, ii, 343; *Henry V*, IV, iv, 75.

101. *Enter* GHOST. The stage direction in the First Quarto is *Enter the Ghost in his night gowne*, where 'night-gown,' as in *Macbeth*, II, ii, 70, means 'dressing-robe.'

105. **laps'd in time and passion**: "having suffered time to slip and passion to cool." — Johnson.

Th' important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

GHOST. Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits;
O, step between her and her fighting soul!
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAMLET. How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN. Alas, how is 't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

HAMLET. On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me;

115. you do Q_2 | you F_1 | thus you $F_2F_3F_4$ Rowe Capell.
116. th' incorporal Q_2 | their corporall F_1 | the corporal F_2F_3.
119. hair Delius Furness | haire Q_2F_1 | hairs Rowe Globe Camb.
120. an end Q_2F_1 Globe Camb | on end Q (1676) Pope Delius.

106. **important**: urgent. Cf. *All 's Well that Ends Well*, III, vii, 21.
112. **Conceit**: imagination. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, III, ii, 145.
119. **bedded**. This is evidently suggested by 'sleeping soldiers.' — **excrements**: outgrowths. Used specially of hair, nails, feathers.
120. **Start . . . stand**. "'Hair,' partly perhaps owing to the influence of 'soldiers,' is treated as a plural." — E. K. Chambers. — **an end**. See note, I, v, 19. Cf. Abbott, § 24.
125. **make them capable**: put sense and understanding into them.

Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects. Then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

QUEEN. To whom do you speak this?

HAMLET. Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

HAMLET. Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN. No, nothing but ourselves.

HAMLET. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he liv'd!
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit* GHOST]

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain;
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

HAMLET. Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
That I have uttered; bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word, which madness

129. **whom** Q_2 | who F_1. **in** | one line in QqFf.
136-137. **This bodiless . . . cunning** 140. **uttered** | vttred Q_2 | vttered Ff.

127. **effects**: action. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, Singer's reading of 'affects' (i.e. 'affections,' 'passions') was adopted. Hamlet is afraid lest the 'piteous action' of the Ghost should move him to pity instead of revenge, so that he will see in a false light what he has to do, and shed tears instead of blood.

133. **habit**: dress. See note on First Quarto stage direction, line 101. — **as**: as if. Cf. *Othello*, III, iii, 77.

135. Cf. *Macbeth*, II, i, 38–39: "A false creation, Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain."

136. **ecstasy**: madness. Cf. II, i, 101, etc.

141. **re-word**: repeat word for word. Cf. *A Lover's Complaint*, 1.

Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks;
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what 's past, avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

QUEEN. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,

143. **that** Q_2 | a Ff.
146. **Whilst** Ff Delius | Whiles Q_2 Globe Camb.
149. **on** Q_2 | or Ff | o'er Furness.
150. **ranker** Q_5 | rancker Q_2 | ranke F_1F_2 | rank F_3F_4.
156. **live** Ff | leaue Q_2.
157. **mine** Ff | my Q_2.
159-163. **That . . . put on** Q_2 | Ff omit. — **eat, Of habits devil** Q (1676) Globe Camb | eate Of habits deuill Q_2 | eat Of habit's devil Rowe | eat, Oft habits' devil Delius.

151. **pursy**: short winded (as the result of 'fatness'). Delius points out that the connection of ideas between 'fatness' and being 'pursy' is repeated in V, ii, 277.

153. **curb**: bend, kneel. The First Folio spelling 'courb' shows the derivation from the Fr. *courber*.

159-161. The general meaning is, Though custom is a monster that eats out all sensibility or consciousness of sin, the evil genius of bad habits, yet on the other hand it is an angel in this respect,

That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence ; the next more easy ;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either master the devil or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night ;
And when you are desirous to be blest,
I 'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,
[*Pointing to* POLONIUS]
I do repent ; but heaven hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind ;
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.

QUEEN. What shall I do?

165-168. the next . . . potency Q_2 | Ff omit. — And either master the Steevens | And Maister the Q_4 | And master the Delius | And either the Q_2 | And either . . . the Globe Camb.

170. [*Pointing to* POLONIUS] Rowe | Q_2Ff omit.

178. One . . . lady Q_2 | Ff omit.

that, etc. Theobald omitted the comma after 'eat' and changed 'devil' to 'evil,' and this reading was adopted in previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare.

167. The 'Maister' ('master') of the Fourth Quarto supplies as good a substitute as any for the word which has dropped out in the text of the earlier Quartos. For suggested substitutes see Furness.

169–170. Hamlet means that when he finds his mother on her knees before God, he will kneel before her.

173. their. Shakespeare often uses 'heaven' as plural.

HAMLET. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'T were good you let him know;
For who, that 's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

QUEEN. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

HAMLET. I must to England; you know that?

180. **the bloat** Warburton | the blowt Q2 | the blunt F1 | the fond Pope.
186. **mad** | made F1.
188. **gib** Q2 . gibbe Ff.

180. **bloat**: bloated. See note on 'disjoint,' I, ii, 20.

181. 'Mouse' was a term of endearment. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 19; *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 69. "Pleasant names may be invented, bird, mouse, lamb, puss, pigeon." — Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

182. **reechy**: foul. Another form of 'reeky.' Cf. *Much Ado about Nothing*, III, iii, 143; *Coriolanus*, II, i, 225.

188. **paddock**: toad; cf. *Macbeth*, I, i, 9. — **gib**: tomcat.

193. **conclusions**: experiments. The passage alludes to some story that has been lost. Sir John Suckling, in one of his letters, refers to "the story of the jackanapes and the partridges."

QUEEN. Alack,
I had forgot; 't is so concluded on.
HAMLET. There 's letters seal'd; and my two school-
fellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
For 't is the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar; and 't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below the mines,
And blow them at the moon. O, 't is most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet!
This man shall set me packing.
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.
Mother, good night. Indeed, this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally;* HAMLET *dragging in* POLONIUS]

200-208. There 's letters . . . directly meet Q2 | Ff omit.
205. petar Q2 | petard Johnson.
215. [*Exeunt severally . . . in* POLONIUS] Steevens | Exit Hamlet tugging in Polonius Ff.

204. **enginer**. Cf. 'pioner,' I, v, 163. See Abbott, § 443.

205–206. **Hoist**. This may be either the past participle of 'hoise' (cf. *2 Henry VI*, I, i, 169) or a contracted form of 'hoisted,' similar to 'bloat' for 'bloated,' line 180. — **petar**: "a Petard or Petarre; an Engine . . . wherewith strong gates are burst open." — Cotgrave. — **'t shall go hard But**. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, i, 75.

209. **packing**. Either (1) 'plotting,' or (2) "being off." Perhaps used punningly in both senses.

210. **guts**. There is abundant evidence that this was formerly a less offensive word than it is to-day.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A room in the castle*

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN

KING. There's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves
You must translate; 't is fit we understand them.
Where is your son?

QUEEN. Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN]

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

KING. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier; in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries 'A rat, a rat!'

ACT IV. SCENE I Q (1676) Rowe | Ff omit. — *A room . . . castle* Globe | Ff omit. — *Enter* KING . . . GUILDENSTERN Q_2 (substantially) | Enter King Ff.

1. **matter** Q_2 | matters Ff.
4. **Bestow . . . while** Q_2 | Ff omit.
5. **my good** Ff Delius Furness | mine own Q_2 Globe Camb.
7. **sea** Q_2 | seas Ff.
10. **Whips . . . rapier** Q_2 | He whips . . . out, and Ff.

ACT IV. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare the first three scenes of this fourth act were printed as scenes v, vi, and vii of the preceding act, on the ground that there is no sufficient interval or pause in the action to warrant the beginning of a new act. This suggestion was made by Caldecott and supported by Elze. It has the approval, too, of Dowden.

And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.
KING. O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there;
His liberty is full of threats to all,
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,
This mad young man; but so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit,
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?
QUEEN. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd;
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure. He weeps for what is done.
KING. O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

11. this Q_2 | his Ff. 22. let Q_2 | let's $F_1F_3F_4$ | lets F_2.

11. **brainish.** Murray defines this rare word as 'headstrong,' 'passionate.' Here it seems to mean 'brainsick,' 'crazy.'

18. **short**: on a short tether. — **out of haunt**: apart. Cf. *As You Like It*, II, i, 15: "And this our life, exempt from public haunt."

26. **mineral**: mine. "Anything that grows in mines and contains metals." — Minsheu. "Fired brimstone in a minerall." — Hall's *Satires*.

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN

Friends both, go join you with some further aid;
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him.
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN]

Come, Gertrude, we 'll call up our wisest friends,
And let them know both what we mean to do,
And what 's untimely done; so, haply slander,
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air. O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle*

Enter HAMLET

HAMLET. Safely stowed.

ROSENCRANTZ. } [*Within*] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!
GUILDENSTERN. }

35. **mother's closet** | Mother Clossets F1. — **dragg'd** | drag'd Q2.
39. **And let** Q2 | To let Ff.
40-44. **so . . . air** | Ff omit.
SCENE II. *Another . . .* | Q2Ff omit. — *Enter* HAMLET Ff | Enter Hamlet, Rosencrans, and others Q2.
2. ROSENCRANTZ. GUILDENSTERN. [*Within*] Gentlemen within Ff | Q2 omits.

40. **so, haply slander**. These words are found in neither Quartos nor Folios. They were supplied by Capell to fill an obvious gap. Theobald suggested "For, haply, slander"; Malone, with *Cymbeline*, III, iv, 41, in mind, read, "So viperous slander."

42. **level**: direct. — **blank**: the white in the target centre.

HAMLET. But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN

ROSENCRANTZ. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAMLET. Compounded it with dust, whereto 't is kin.

ROSENCRANTZ. Tell us where 't is, that we may take it thence
And bear it to the chapel.

HAMLET. Do not believe it.

ROSENCRANTZ. Believe what?

HAMLET. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge, what replication should be made by the son of a king?

ROSENCRANTZ. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAMLET. Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end. He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be last swallow'd: when he needs what you have glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

ROSENCRANTZ. I understand you not, my lord.

3. **But soft** Q_2 | Ff omit.
17. **like an ape** Ff Globe Camb Delius | like an apple Q_2 | like an Ape doth Nuttes Q_1 | like an ape doth nuts Furness.

12–13. **to be demanded of**: on being questioned by. The infinitive is used gerundively. See Abbott, § 356. — **replication**: reply.

15. **countenance**: favor. Cf. *2 Henry IV*, IV, ii, 11–13:

> That man that sits within a monarch's heart,
> And ripens in the sunshine of his favour,
> Would he abuse the countenance of the king.

HAMLET. I am glad of it; a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

ROSENCRANTZ. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

HAMLET. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing —

GUILDENSTERN. A thing, my lord!

HAMLET. Of nothing; bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III. *Another room in the castle*

Enter KING, *attended*

KING. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dangerous it is that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He 's lov'd of the distracted multitude,

29-30. Hide fox, and all after Ff | Q2 omits. SCENE III Pope. — *Another* . . . *castle* Capell | Ff omit. — *Enter* KING, *attended* Capell | Enter King, and two or three Q2 | Enter King Ff.

22–23. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 871–873:

> A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
> Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
> Of him that makes it.

26–27. Hamlet is undoubtedly talking deliberate nonsense to tease and puzzle his questioners. If an interpretation be demanded, this may serve: The king's body is with the king, but not the king's soul; he is a king without kingliness.

29–30. **Hide fox, and all after.** Probably a phrase from such a children's game as 'hide and seek.' "The old fox, Polonius, is hidden; come, let us all follow the sport and hunt him out." — Dowden. Cf. IV, iii, 34.

4. **distracted**: without judgment. Perhaps 'fickle' is implied.

Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;
And, where 't is so, th' offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause; diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are reliev'd,
Or not at all.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ

How now! what hath befall'n?

ROSENCRANTZ. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

KING. But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING. Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET *and* GUILDENSTERN

KING. Now, Hamlet, where 's Polonius?

HAMLET. At supper.

KING. At supper! where?

HAMLET. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten; a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your

7. never Q_2 | neerer F_1F_2. 21. politic | politique Q_2 | Ff omit.

5–7. Who like, not what their judgment approves, for they have none, but what pleases their eyes; and in this case the criminal's punishment is considered, but not his crime.

9. **Deliberate pause**: something paused over and deliberated on.

21. **politic worms**: such worms as might feed appropriately on the body of a politician. 'Convocation,' 'worms,' 'emperor,' 'diet,' make an allusion here to the famous Diet of Worms very probable.

worm is your only emperor for diet; we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table; that 's the end.

KING. Alas, alas!

HAMLET. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING. What dost thou mean by this?

HAMLET. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

KING. Where is Polonius?

HAMLET. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' th' other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

KING. Go seek him there. [*To some* Attendants]

HAMLET. He will stay till ye come. [*Exeunt* Attendants]

KING. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done, must send thee hence
With fiery quickness; therefore prepare thyself.
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
Th' associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

HAMLET. For England?

23. **ourselves** Q_2 | our selfe F_1.
24. **service, two** | seruice to F_1.
35. **within** Q_2 | Ff omit.
37. [*To some* ... Capell | Ff omit.
38. **ye** Ff | you Q_2.—[*Exeunt* ... Capell | Ff omit.
39. **deed** Q_2 | deed of thine Ff.
44. **is bent** Q_2 | at bent Ff.

31. **progress**: royal journey of state. Cf. *2 Henry VI*, I, iv, 76.
40. **tender**: have regard for. — **dearly**: heartily.
44. **tend**: are waiting for you. See note, I, iii, 83.

KING. Ay, Hamlet.

HAMLET. Good.

KING. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAMLET. I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for England! Farewell, dear mother.

KING. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAMLET. My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England! [*Exit*]

KING. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard; Delay it not; I 'll have him hence to-night.
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans on th' affair; pray you, make haste.
[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN]
And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught —
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us — thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

47. **them** Q_2 | him Ff.
56. [*Exeunt*... GUILDENSTERN] Theobald | Q_2Ff omit.
61. **set** Q_2Ff | let Pope.
63. **conjuring** Ff Delius Furness | congruing Q_2 Globe Camb.

61. **coldly set**: "regard with indifference." — Schmidt. Cf. the modern expression 'set' much or little by a thing.

63. **conjuring**: earnestly entreating. Accented here on the first syllable. The 'earnest conjuration' of V, ii, 38, is sufficient defence of the Folio reading here.

65. **hectic.** "Sicke of an Hectic, or continuall Feauer." — Cotgrave.

And thou must cure me. Till I know 't is done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. [*Exit*]

SCENE IV. *A plain in Denmark*

Enter FORTINBRAS, *a* CAPTAIN, *and* Soldiers, *marching*

FORTINBRAS. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
Claims the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye;
And let him know so.

CAPTAIN. I will do 't, my lord.

FORTINBRAS. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt* FORTINBRAS *and* Soldiers]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and others*

HAMLET. Good sir, whose powers are these?

CAPTAIN. They are of Norway, sir.

HAMLET. How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?

67. were ne'er begun Ff | will nere begin Q_2.

SCENE IV Pope | Scene II Rowe | Ff omit. — *A plain in Denmark* Capell | Ff omit. — *Enter . . . marching* Globe | Enter Fortinbras with an Armie Ff | Enter Fortinbras with his Army over the stage Q_2.

8. softly Q_2 | safely Ff. — [*Exeunt . . .* | Exit Ff | Q_2 omits.

9-66. Good sir . . . nothing worth Q_2 | Ff omit.

4. The 'rendezvous' here meant is the place where Fortinbras is to wait for the captain after the delivery of the message to the king.

6. I will wait upon his presence and pay my respects to him in person. The household books of James the First's reign show that 'in his eye' was a formal court phrase for 'in the royal presence.'

8. **softly**: slowly, leisurely. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, V, i, 16.

CAPTAIN. Against some part of Poland.
HAMLET. Who commands them, sir?
CAPTAIN. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.
HAMLET. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?
CAPTAIN. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.
HAMLET. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.
CAPTAIN. Yes, 't is already garrison'd.
HAMLET. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw;
This is th' imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.
CAPTAIN. God be wi' you, sir. [*Exit*]
ROSENCRANTZ. Will 't please you go, my lord?
HAMLET. I 'll be with you straight. Go a little before.
[*Exeunt all but* HAMLET]
How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,

17. **speak** | speak it Pope.
30. **be wi' you** | buy you Q2.
31. [*Exeunt . . .* | Q2 omits.

20. I would not lease it if I had to pay a rent of five, only five, ducats. 'Farm' here in the sense of 'lease' or 'rent' is opposed to 'in fee,' line 22, meaning 'in absolute possession.'

27. **imposthume**: abscess. "A course of evill humours gathered to some part of the bodie."— Minsheu.

If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event —
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And ever three parts coward — I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing 's to do,'
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me;
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour 's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,

36. **discourse**: power of reasoning. See note, I, ii, 150.
39. **fust**: grow mouldy. "Fustie, tasting of the cask." — Cotgrave.
41. **event**: outcome, issue, consequence. So in line 50.
45. **Sith**. An abbreviated form of 'sithence,' whence 'since.'
50. **Makes mouths at**: mocks at, holds in contempt.
54 56. True greatness lies, not in fighting upon every trifling occasion, but in finding provocation in the very smallest thing when honor is involved.

Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [*Exit*]

SCENE V. *Elsinore. A room in the castle*

Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, *and a* GENTLEMAN

QUEEN. I will not speak with her.

GENTLEMAN. She is importunate, indeed distract;
Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN. What would she have?

GENTLEMAN. She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There 's tricks i' th' world; and hems, and beats her heart;

SCENE V Pope | Scene III Rowe | Ff omit.—*Elsinore . . . castle* Capell | Ff omit.—*Enter* . . . GENTLEMAN Pope | Enter Horatio, Gertrard, and a Gentleman Q2 | Enter Queene and Horatio Ff.

2, 4. GENTLEMAN | Gent. Q2 Globe Camb | Hor. Ff Delius.

61. **trick**: toy, trifle. Cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, IV, iii, 67.

64. **continent**: that which contains. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 92. "If there be no fullness, then is the continent greater than the content." — Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*.

2. GENTLEMAN. The arrangement of speeches in the opening of this scene is that made by Collier, and follows the Quartos closely. "The omission in the Folios of the Gentleman was, no doubt, to avoid the employment of another actor." — Collier.

Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

HORATIO. 'T were good she were spoken with; for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

QUEEN. Let her come in. [*Exit* GENTLEMAN]
[*Aside*] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss;
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter GENTLEMAN, *with* OPHELIA

OPHELIA. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN. How now, Ophelia!

9. **aim** F_3F_4 | ayme F_1F_2 | yawne Q_2 | gape, Elze conj.
12. **might** Q_2 | would Ff.
14. HORATIO | Hora. Q_2 | Qu. (Queen) Ff.
16. QUEEN. **Let her come in** | Collier's arrangement (Blackstone conj.) | Q_2 continues to Horatio. — [*Exit* GENTLEMAN] Hanmer | Exit Hor. Johnson | Q_2Ff omit.
21. *Re-enter* . . . Globe | Enter Ophelia Q_2 (after line 16) | Enter Ophelia distracted Ff.

6. **Spurns enviously at straws**: kicks spitefully at trifles.
9. **collection**: inference. Cf. *Cymbeline*, V, v, 432. — **aim**: guess. Cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III, i, 45.
18. **toy**: trifle. — **amiss**: calamity. Cf. *Sonnets*, XXXV, 7.
19. **jealousy**: suspicion. Cf. II, i, 112.
21. *Re-enter* GENTLEMAN, *with* OPHELIA. The First Quarto stage direction is, "Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe,

OPHELIA. [*Sings*]

How should I your true-love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.

QUEEN. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

OPHELIA. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

O, ho!

QUEEN. Nay, but, Ophelia, —

OPHELIA. Pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] White his shroud as the mountain snow, —

Enter KING

QUEEN. Alas, look here, my lord.

33. **O, ho** Q_2 Delius | Oh, oh Camb | Ff Globe omit.

singing." Furness gives the traditional music of these song snatches. Sir Joshua Reynolds says of this scene:

There is no part of this play in its representation on the stage more pathetic than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes. A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effects. In the latter case the audience supply what is wanting, and with the former they sympathize.

25. **cockle hat**: hat with a scallop shell stuck in it. This was a sign that the wearer had been beyond the sea on pilgrimage. The pilgrim's habit was often assumed as a disguise for lovers. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, v.

26. **shoon**. Cf. *2 Henry VI*, IV, ii, 195. This form of the plural is still common in Scottish dialect.

OPHELIA. [*Sings*]

Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did not go,
With true-love showers.

KING. How do you, pretty lady? 39

OPHELIA. Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

KING. Conceit upon her father.

OPHELIA. Pray you, let 's have no words of this; but, when they ask you what it means, say you this: 45

[*Sings*] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

36. **Larded** Ff | Larded all Q_2.
37. **did not** Q_2Ff Dowden | did Pope Globe Camb Delius Furness.
39. **you** Q_2 | ye Ff.
40. **God** 'ild Capell | good dild Q_2 | God dil'd Ff.

36. **Larded**: garnished, decorated. Cf. V, ii, 20.

40. **God 'ild**: God yield, God help. Cf. *As You Like It*, III, iii, 76.

40–41. The reference is to a legend, quoted by Douce, that Christ went into a baker's shop and asked for bread. When the mistress put dough into the oven, her daughter reproved her for too great generosity and reduced it to a very small size. The dough grew miraculously huge, whereupon the daughter cried 'Heugh, heugh, heugh!' like an owl, and Christ transformed her into an owl. According to Leland, a gipsy name for the owl is *Maromengro's Chavi*, or 'Baker's Daughter.'

46–49. "This song alludes to the custom of the first girl seen by a man on the morning of this day being considered his Valentine, or true-love." — Halliwell. The plot of Scott's novel, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, turns upon the observance of this custom; hence the significance of the sub-title, *St. Valentine's Day*.

KING. How long hath she been thus?

OPHELIA. I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' th' cold ground. My brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [*Exit*]

KING. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [*Exit* HORATIO]

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him; poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts;
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France,
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death,

50. **been thus** | bin this F_1.
61. **battalions** | battalians Q_2 | Battaliaes F_1F_2 | Battels F_3F_4.
71. **Feeds** Q_2 | Keepes F_1F_2 | Keeps F_3F_4. — **his wonder** Ff | this wonder Q_2 | his anger Hanmer.

66. **hugger-mugger**: secret haste. See Murray. In North's *Plutarch*, Antony urges that Cæsar's body should be "honourably buried and not in hugger-mugger."

Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death. [*A noise within*]

QUEEN. Alack, what noise is this?

KING. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

Enter another GENTLEMAN

What is the matter?

GENTLEMAN. Save yourself, my lord;
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry, 'Choose we; Laertes shall be king!'
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!'

75. person Q_2 | persons Ff. Messenger Q_2 (in Ff after death).
79. Scene VI Pope. 82. impetuous | impitious Q_2 | impittious F_1.
80. *Enter* . . . Staunton | Enter a

77. **murdering-piece**: cannon charged with case shot.

79. **Switzers**: royal guards. Malone here quotes from Nash, *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem*: "Law, logicke, and the Switzers may be hired to fight for any body."

81. **overpeering of his list**: overflowing its bounds.

83. **head**: armed force. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 284.

87. This obviously refers to 'custom' and 'antiquity,' though some interpret the words as applying to 'rabble.'

QUEEN. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!
KING. The doors are broke. [*Noise within*]

Enter LAERTES, *armed;* DANES *following*

LAERTES. Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.
DANES. No, let's come in.
LAERTES. I pray you, give me leave.
DANES. We will, we will. [*They retire without the door*]
LAERTES. I thank you; keep the door. O thou vile king,
Give me my father!
QUEEN. Calmly, good Laertes.
LAERTES. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,
Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brows
Of my true mother.
KING. What's the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person.
There's such divinity doth hedge a king
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd. Let him go, Gertrude.
Speak, man.

94. *Enter* LAERTES . . . Capell | Enter Laertes Ff (after line 92).
95, 96. DANES | All Q_2Ff.
96. [*They retire without the door*] Capell | Ff omit.
99. **that 's calm** | thats calme Q_2 | that calmes F_1.
101. **brows** | brow Ff.

92. **counter**: "when a hound hunteth backwards, the same way that the chase is come." — Holme, *Academy of Armory*.
101. **unsmirched**: unstained. Cf. 'besmirch,' I, iii, 15.

LAERTES. Where 's my father?
KING. Dead.
QUEEN. But not by him.
KING. Let him demand his fill.
LAERTES. How came he dead? I 'll not be juggled with.
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I 'll be reveng'd
Most throughly for my father.
KING. Who shall stay you?
LAERTES. My will, not all the world;
And, for my means, I 'll husband them so well
They shall go far with little.
KING. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is 't writ in your revenge,
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?
LAERTES. None but his enemies.
KING. Will you know them, then?
LAERTES. To his good friends thus wide I 'll ope my arms,

123. **father's death** F_3F_4 | fathers death F_1 | father Q_2. — **is 't** | if Ff. 124. **swoopstake** | soopstake Q_2 | soop-stake F_1 | sweep-stake Johnson.

124–125. There is a mixture of metaphors here. "Are you going to vent your rage on both friend and foe; like a gambler who insists on sweeping the stakes, whether the point is in his favor or not." — Moberly. The figure is clearer in the First Quarto. — **swoopstake**: indiscriminately. The First Quarto reads:

> Therefore will you like a most desperate gamster,
> Swoop-stake-like, draw at friend, and foe, and all.

And, like the kind life-rendering pelican,
Repast them with my blood.
KING. Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce
As day does to your eye.
DANES. [*Within*] Let her come in.
LAERTES. How now! what noise is that?

Re-enter OPHELIA

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turns the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is 't possible, a young maid's wits

128. pelican Q_2 | Politician F_1.
132. sensibly | sencibly Q_2 | sensible Ff Rowe Johnson.
134. Scene VII Pope. — DANES. [*Within*] Let . . . in (see note).
138. by Ff | with Q_2.
139. turns F_3F_4 | turnes F_1F_2 | turne Q_2.

128. The belief that the pelican fed its young with its own blood belongs to the fictitious natural history which is one of the characteristics of euphuism. Lyly calls Queen Elizabeth "that good Pelicane that to feede hir people spareth not to rend his owne personne"; and elsewhere in his *Euphues and his England*, we have, "the Pelicane, who stricketh blood out of his owne body to do others good." Cf. *Richard II*, II, i, 126; *King Lear*, III, iv, 77.

134. DANES. [*Within*] Let her come in. The arrangement is Capell's, followed in Globe and Camb. The Second Quarto has the stage direction *A noyse within* opposite 'eye,' and 'Let her come in' is given to Laertes. The Folios have 'A noise within. Let her come in,' as if a stage direction, after 'eye.'

Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 't is fine
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

OPHELIA. [*Sings*]

They bore him barefac'd on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And on his grave rain'd many a tear.

Fare you well, my dove!

LAERTES. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

OPHELIA. You must sing, 'Down a-down, and you call him a-down-a.' O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward that stole his master's daughter.

LAERTES. This nothing's more than matter.

OPHELIA. There 's rosemary, that 's for remembrance;

142. **an old** Ff | a poore Q_2 | a sick Q (1676). 148. **on** Ff Furness | in Q_2 Globe Camb. — **rain'd** Q_2 raines F_1. 152-153. **You . . . a-down-a** | as song in Globe Camb.

144. **instance**: example, evidence. The precious thing which Ophelia's fineness of nature has sent after her father is her sanity.

149. **Fare . . . dove**. The Folios print as part of the song.

153. The 'wheel' was interpreted by Steevens as 'refrain,' and Guest, in his *English Rhythms*, uses it in this sense; but here Ophelia probably imagines that she is singing at the spinning wheel.

154. Nothing is known of this story of the false steward.

156. The language of flowers is very ancient, and the old poets have many instances of it. In *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, Perdita makes herself delectable in the use of it, distributing her flowers much as Ophelia does here. In Greene's *Alcida*, too, flower fancies are introduced much as they are in this scene. Rosemary, being supposed to strengthen the memory, was held emblematic of remembrance, and in that thought was distributed at weddings and funerals.

pray you, love, remember; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

LAERTES. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted. 160

OPHELIA. There's fennel for you, and columbines; there's rue for you, and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy. I would give you some violets, but they wither'd all when my father died. They say he made a good end, — 166

[*Sings*] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

157. **pray you** Q_2 | pray Ff. — **pansies** Johnson | pancies $Q_2F_2F_3F_4$ | Paconcies F_1. 162-163. **herb of grace** Camb | herbe of Grace Q_2 | Herbe-Grace F_1F_2 | herb-grace Rowe Globe Delius.

157. **pansies**. From the Fr. *pensées*. Spenser's spelling 'Paunces' (*The Faerie Queene*, III, i, 16) approximates the French pronunciation.

159. **document**: lesson. The etymological sense of the word (Lat. *doceo*). Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, I, x, 19:

> And heavenly documents thereont did preach,
> That weaker witt of man could never reach.

161. Fennel and columbine were symbols, respectively, of cajolery and ingratitude, and stage tradition makes Ophelia present them to the guileful and faithless king.

162. 'Rue,' symbolizing grief and repentance, was appropriately called 'herb of grace' (cf. *Richard II*, III, iv, 105), and Ophelia gives it to the queen.

163–164. **with a difference**. Usually interpreted as a heraldic phrase, but the probable meaning is simply, 'with a different signification'; i.e. 'You wear it for repentance; I wear it for sorrow.'

164. **daisy**. "The dissembling daisie." — Greene, *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*. — **violets**. Does she recall her brother's words (I, iii, 7)? "Violet is for faithfullness." — *Handfull of Pleasant Delites*.

167. Poor Ophelia in her madness remembers fragments of many songs. *Bonny Robin* seems to have been a popular poem on Robin

LAERTES. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

OPHELIA. [*Sings*]

And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed;
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll;
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan:
God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' you.
[*Exit*]

LAERTES. Do you see this, O God?

KING. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.

170, 171. he Ff Delius Furness | a Q_2 | a' Globe Camb.
175. was as Q_2 | as Ff.
179. God ha' mercy | God a mercy Q_2 | Gramercy Ff Rowe Capell.
180. be wi' you | buy ye F_1.
181. O God Q_2 | you Gods F_1.
182. commune Q_2 | common F_1.

Hood, and the tune is found in more than one Elizabethan song book. Cf. *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, IV, i, 107: "I can sing *The Broom* and *Bonny Robin*."

168. **Thought**: grief. Cf. III, i, 85. — **passion**: suffering.

170–179. This seems to be from a song called *The Merrie Milkmaids*, or *The Milkmaids' Dumps*. It is travestied in *Eastward Hoe*, the play written by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, in which Hamlet is burlesqued as a foolish footman.

If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

LAERTES. Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure burial —
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation —
Cry to be heard, as 't were from heaven to earth,
That I must call 't in question.

KING. So you shall;
And where th' offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE VI. *Another room in the castle*

Enter HORATIO *and a* SERVANT

HORATIO. What are they that would speak with me?

SERVANT. Sailors, sir; they say they have letters for you.

193. **burial** F_3F_4 Delius Furness | buriall F_1F_2 | funerall Q_2 | funeral Globe Camb.

197. **call 't** Q_2 | call Ff.

SCENE VI Capell | Scene VIII Pope. — *Another . . . castle* | Q_2 F1 omit. — *Enter . . . a* SERVANT | Enter . . . Attendant Ff.

194. **hatchment**: escutcheon. Shortened and altered from 'achievement' through the forms *atcheament*, *atchement*, *atch'ment*. — Murray.

195. The funerals of knights and persons of rank were made with great ceremony and ostentation formerly. Sir John Hawkins observes that "the sword, the helmet, the gauntlet, spurs, and tabard are still hung over the grave of every knight."

HORATIO. Let them come in. [*Exit* SERVANT]
I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter SAILORS

1 SAILOR. God bless you, sir.

HORATIO. Let him bless thee too.

1 SAILOR. He shall, sir, and 't please him. There 's a letter for you, sir — it comes from th' ambassador that was bound for England — if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

HORATIO. [*Reads*] Horatio, when thou shalt have overlook'd this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compell'd valour. In the grapple I boarded them. On the instant they got clear of our ship: so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did: I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.

Come, I will give you way for these your letters;

21. **haste** F_3F_4 Delius | hast F_1F_2 | speed Q_1 Globe Camb | speede Q_2.
22. **thine** Q_2 Globe Camb Delius | your Ff Rowe | thy Pope.
27. **give** Delius | giue Ff | make Q_4 Globe Camb | Q_2 omits.

18–19. thieves of mercy: merciful thieves.
23. bore: caliber, capacity. The figure is from gunnery.

And do 't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE VII. *Another room in the castle*

Enter KING, *and* LAERTES

KING. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursu'd my life.

LAERTES. It well appears. But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

KING. O, for two special reasons,
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself —
My virtue or my plague, be it either which —
She 's so conjunctive to my life and soul
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive
Why to a public count I might not go,

SCENE VII Capell | Scene IX Pope.—*Another ... castle* | Q_2Ff omit.

8. **safety** Ff | safetie, greatnes Q_2.
11. **But** Q_2 Globe | And Ff Delius.

9. **mainly**: powerfully. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, iv, 87.
15. See note on the Ptolemaic astronomy, I, v, 17.
17. **count**: account, reckoning. Cf. 'compt,' *Othello*, V, ii, 273.

Is the great love the general gender bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too lightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

LAERTES. And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

KING. Break not your sleeps for that. You must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.
I lov'd your father, and we love ourself,
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine —

20. **Would** F1 | Worke Q2 Malone Steevens Grant White.
21. **gyves** F1 | giues Q2.
24. **aim'd** Q2 | arm'd F1.
27. **Whose worth** Q2 | Who was Ff | Who has Johnson.

18. **general gender**: common people. Cf. "gender of herbs," *Othello*, I. iii. 320. In this sense 'gender' is a doublet of 'genus.'

20. Baths at King's Newnham, Warwickshire, had this property. Clar quotes from Lyly, *Euphues*: "Would I had sipped of that ryuer in Caria, which turneth those that drink of it to stones."

21. Punishment would endear him the more to the people.

22. "Weak bowes and lyghte shaftes can not stand in a rough wind." — Ascham, *Toxophilus*.

27. Either, (1) If I may praise her for what she was, but has now ceased to be; or, (2) If I may go back to her as a theme of praise.

28. Stood on a height, challenging all the world.

Enter a MESSENGER, *with letters*

How now! what news?

MESSENGER. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
This to your majesty; this to the queen.

KING. From Hamlet! who brought them?

MESSENGER. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:
They were given me by Claudio; he receiv'd them
Of him that brought them.

KING. Laertes, you shall hear them.
Leave us. [*Exit* MESSENGER]

[*Reads*] High and mighty: You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes, when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.

HAMLET.

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAERTES. Know you the hand?

KING. 'T is Hamlet's character. 'Naked!'
And in a postscript here he says, 'alone.'
Can you advise me?

LAERTES. I 'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
'Thus didest thou.'

41. **Of . . . them** Q_2 | Ff omit.
46. **occasion** Q_2 Globe Camb | Occasions Ff Rowe Delius.
49. **and** Q_2 | or Ff.

49. **abuse**: deception, delusion. Cf. the verb, II, ii, 590.
50. **character**: handwriting. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, V, ii, 38.
56. **didest**. Some editors adopt the First Quarto reading, 'diest.'

KING. If it be so, Laertes —
As how should it be so? How otherwise? —
Will you be rul'd by me?
LAERTES. Ay, my lord,
If so you 'll not o'errule me to a peace.
KING. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.
LAERTES. My lord, I will be rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.
KING. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine. Your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,

58. **Ay, my lord** Q_2 | Ff omit.
59. **If so you 'll** Ff Rowe | So you will Q_2 Globe Camb Delius.
61. **checking** Ff | the king Q_2.
67-80. LAERTES. **My lord . . . and graveness** Q_2 | Ff omit.

57. How should it be either true or not true? The thing seems incredible either way — that Hamlet should have returned, or that the letter should not be in his handwriting.

61. **checking at**: refusing to pursue. A falconry term. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II, v, 125; III, i, 71. "For who knows not, quoth she, that this hawk, which comes now so fair to the fist, may tomorrow check at any lure?" — Hinde, *Eliosto Libidinoso*.

66. **uncharge the practice**: acquit the proceeding of foul play.

As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

LAERTES. What part is that, my lord?

KING. A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settl'd age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy; —
I 've seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback; but this gallant
Had witchcraft in 't; he grew unto his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse
As had he been incorps'd and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast. So far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

LAERTES. A Norman was 't?

KING. A Norman.

80. **Two months since** Q_2 | Some two months hence Ff.
83. **can** Q_2 | ran Ff.
84. **unto** Q_2 | into Ff.
87. **topp'd** | topt Q_2 | past Ff. — **my thought** Ff | me thought Q_2.

75. **unworthiest siege**: lowest rank. Cf. *Othello*, I, ii, 22.

80. 'Health' refers to 'the light and careless livery' of youth, as 'graveness' does to the 'sables' (see note, III, ii, 113) and the 'weeds' of 'settl'd age.' Schmidt interprets 'health' as 'prosperity.'

83. **can**. Shakespeare often uses 'can' (see Murray) in this absolute way. Cf. *King Lear*, IV, iv, 8; *The Tempest*, IV, i, 27; *The Phœnix and Turtle*, 14.

86. **incorps'd**: incorporate, of one body with. "The mythical Centaur was doubtless in Shakespeare's mind." — Chambers.

87. **topp'd**: surpassed. Cf. *Macbeth*, IV, iii, 57.

88. **forgery**: invention. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 81.

LAERTES. Upon my life, Lamond.

KING. The very same.

LAERTES. I know him well; he is the brooch, indeed,
And gem of all the nation.

KING. He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especially,
That he cried out, 't would be a sight indeed,
If one could match you. The scrimers of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this —

LAERTES. What out of this, my lord?

KING. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

LAERTES. Why ask you this?

KING. Not that I think you did not love your father,
But that I know love is begun by time,

91. Lamond Pope Globe Camb | Lamound Ff | Lamord Q_2 Delius.
93. the Q_2 | our Ff.
97. especially Ff Delius Furness | especial Q_2 Globe Camb.
99-101. The scrimers . . . oppos'd them Q_2 | Ff omit.
105. What Q_2 | Why Ff.

91. **Lamond.** Refers possibly to Pietro Monte, instructor to Louis XII's (usually given, incorrectly, Louis VII) master of the horse.
92. **brooch**: conspicuous ornament. Often worn in the hat.
96. **defence**: skill in the science of defence or sword practice.
99. **scrimers**: fencers. An anglicized form of the Fr. *escrimeurs*.

And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it,
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too much. That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to th' quick o' the ulcer;
Hamlet comes back. What would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

LAERTES. To cut his throat i' th' church.

KING. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;

113-122. There lives . . . the ulcer Q2 | Ff omit.

111. **passages of proof**: instances in experience.

116. **plurisy**: excess. Elizabethan dramatists often used the word as if it came from the Lat. *plus*, *pluris*. 'Goodness, growing to a plurisy,' is much the same as Burns's "unco guid." Cf. Massinger's *Unnatural Combat*, IV, i, 136, where Malefort says to his daughter, "Thy plurisy of goodness is thy ill."

121–122. An allusion to the old belief that sighing shortened life by drawing the blood from the heart. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, ii, 97. Cf. *2 Henry VI*, III, ii, 63. The expression "Day sorrow drinks our blood" occurs in *Romeo and Juliet*, III, v, 59.

126. Murder should not have the protection or privilege of sanctuary in any place. The allusion is to the rights of sanctuary with which certain religious places were formerly invested, so that criminals resorting to them were shielded not only from private revenge, but from the arm of the law.

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home.
We 'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together,
And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils, so that, with ease
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,
Requite him for your father.

LAERTES. I will do 't;
And for that purpose I 'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal; I 'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

KING. Let 's further think of this;

141. **that but dip** Q_2 | I but dipt Ff.

130. **put on**: instigate. Cf. V, ii, 387.

137. **unbated**: unblunted, without the button. — **pass of practice.** This may mean either (1) treacherous thrust, or (2) a thrust made as in exercise of skill, without any purpose of harm.

140. **mountebank**: quack doctor. Cf. *Othello*, I, iii, 61.

142. **cataplasm**: plaster, poultice. The word is still in use.

143. **simples**: herbs (as single elements in a compound).

Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'T were better not assay'd; therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold
If this should blast in proof. Soft! let me see:
We 'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings, —
I ha't!
When in your motion you are hot and dry —
As make your bouts more violent to that end —
And that he calls for drink, I 'll have prepar'd him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

Enter QUEEN

How now, sweet queen!

QUEEN. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow. Your sister 's drown'd, Laertes.

153. **should** Ff Globe Delius Furness | did Q_2 Camb.
154. **cunnings** Q_2 | commings F_1.
155. **ha't** Ff | hate Q_2.
157. **that** Q_2 | the Ff.
161. **But stay, what noise** Q_2 Camb Delius | Ff Globe omit.
162. **How now** $F_2F_3F_4$ | how F_1.
163. Scene X Pope.
164. **they** Q_2 | they'l Ff Rowe.

150. If our intention should expose or betray itself.

153. **blast in proof**: burst in the test (like a cannon).

159. **for the nonce**: for the particular purpose. The phrase is a corruption of the Middle English for *than anes, than* being an old dative form of the demonstrative 'that.' Murray uses 'nonceword' to describe a word that is constructed to serve a need of the moment.

160. **stuck**: thrust. "More properly 'stock,' an abbreviation of *stoccado* (*stoccata*)." — Dyce. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, III, iv, 303: "he gives me the stuck in with such a mortal motion."

LAERTES. Drown'd! O, where? 165

QUEEN. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name, 170
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them;
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide, 175
And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element; but long it could not be 180

174. her Q_2 | the Ff.
176. a while Ff Camb | awhile Q_2 Globe Delius.
177. tunes Ff | laudes Q_2 | lauds Q_5 Elze Keightley.
179. indued F_1 | deduced $F_2F_3F_4$.

165. Coleridge thus comments on the death of Ophelia: "... who in the beginning lay like a little projection of land into a lake or stream, covered with spray-flowers, quietly reflected in the quiet waters, but at length is undermined or loosened, and becomes a fairy isle, and after a brief vagrancy sinks almost without an eddy."

166. The willow is significant of forsaken love. Cf. *Othello*, IV, iii, 28: "she had a song of 'willow.'"

170. liberal. Either (1) 'free-spoken' (cf. *Richard II*, II, i, 229), or (2) 'licentious' (cf. *Much Ado about Nothing*, IV, i, 93).

177. tunes. The 'laudes' ('psalms,' 'hymns') of the Second Quarto might well be preferred, as agreeing better with 'chanted,' and as conveying a touch of pathos which 'tunes' does not quite reach. 'Tunes' suits better the song snatches in Scene V.

178. incapable of: insensible to. Cf. 'capable,' III, ii, 10.

179. indued: "endowed with properties suited to." — Malone.

Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

LAERTES. Alas, then is she drown'd?

QUEEN. Drown'd, drown'd!

LAERTES. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears; but yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will; when these are gone,
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord;
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts it. [*Exit*]

KING. Let 's follow, Gertrude;
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again;
Therefore let 's follow. [*Exeunt*]

181. **their** Q_2 | her Ff.
182. **poor wretch** | poore wench Q_4Q_5.
183. **is she drown'd?** Ff Delius Furness | she is drown'd! Pope Globe Camb | she is drownd Q_2.
191. **douts** Knight | doubts F_1 | drownes Q_2F_2.

183–184. As Corson indicates, the Queen's reply shows that Laertes's speech must have been meant to be interrogative.

189. **The woman will be out.** Clar quotes, as a fitting commentary on this, *Henry V*, IV, vi, 30–32:

> But I had not so much of man in me,
> And all my mother came into mine eyes,
> And gave me up to tears.

Cf. also *Twelfth Night*, II, i, 41–43: "I am yet so near the manners of my mother that upon the least occasion more mine eyes will tell tales of me."

191. **douts**: does out, puts out. Cf. *Henry V*, IV, ii, 11.

ACT V

SCENE I. *A churchyard*

Enter two CLOWNS, *with spades, &c.*

1 CLOWN. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2 CLOWN. I tell thee she is: and therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1 CLOWN. How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

2 CLOWN. Why, 't is found so.

1 CLOWN. It must be 'se offendendo'; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform; argal she drown'd herself wittingly.

ACT V. SCENE I] Ff omit.— *A churchyard* Capell | Ff omit.— *Enter . . . &c.* | Enter two Clownes Q_2Ff | Clowns F_3F_4.
1,6,etc. 1 CLOWN | Clown(Clo) Ff.
3. 2 CLOWN | Other Ff.
11. **to act** Q_2 | an Act Ff.
12. **argal** | or all Q_2.

2. **salvation**. The Clowns, like Dogberry and Launcelot Gobbo, use many words that mean exactly the opposite of what they intend.

4. **straight**: straightway, immediately. But Johnson interprets, "from east to west in a direct line, parallel with the church."

9. The Clown tries to show off his legal learning and mistakes *offendendo* for *defendendo*. Cf. Sir Toby Belch's law phrases.

12. **argal**. The Clown's corruption of *ergo*, 'therefore.' The word 'argal' is sometimes applied to-day to a bit of clumsy reasoning.

2 CLOWN. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver, —

1 CLOWN. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes, — mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself; argal he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

2 CLOWN. But is this law? 20

1 CLOWN. Ay, marry, is 't; crowner's quest law.

2 CLOWN. Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial. 24

1 CLOWN. Why, there thou say'st; and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come,

27. **Christian** Ff | Christen Q2.

13. The First Clown is the sexton; the Second a laborer.

16. **nill**: will not. Cf. *Pericles*, III, Prologue, 55.

21. Sir John Hawkins thinks that Shakespeare here meant to ridicule a case reported by Plowden. Sir James Hales had drowned himself in a fit of insanity, and the legal question was whether his lease was thereby forfeited to the Crown. Much subtilty was expended in finding out whether Sir James was the 'agent' or the 'patient'; that is, whether he went to the water or the water came to him. The following is part of the argument:

> Sir James Hales was dead, and how came he to his death? It may be answered, by drowning; and who drowned him? Sir James Hales; and when did he drown him? In his lifetime. So that Sir James Hales being alive caused Sir James Hales to die, and the act of the living man was the death of the dead man.

— **crowner's quest**: coroner's inquest. 'Crowner' is still often heard in dialect. With 'quest' cf. *Richard III*, I, iv, 189.

26. **countenance**: encouragement.

27. **even Christian**: fellow Christian. Chaucer has 'evencristen.'

my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 CLOWN. Was he a gentleman?

1 CLOWN. A was the first that ever bore arms.

2 CLOWN. Why, he had none.

1 CLOWN. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says, Adam digg'd; could he dig without arms? I 'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself —

2 CLOWN. Go to.

1 CLOWN. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 CLOWN. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 CLOWN. I like thy wit well, in good faith. The gallows does well; but how does it well? It does well to those that do ill: now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again; come.

2 CLOWN. Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1 CLOWN. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

2 CLOWN. Marry, now I can tell.

31. **A** Q_2 | A' Globe Camb | He Ff.

28–29. The allusion is to the fourteenth century couplet, "When Adam dolve, and Eve span, Who was then the gentleman?"

31. **A**: he. Modern editors often print 'a'' or ''a.'

36–37. "Confess thyself and be hanged" was a common Elizabethan expression.

50. **unyoke**. "Unharness the team of your wit." — Dowden.

1 CLOWN. To 't.

2 CLOWN. Mass, I cannot tell. 53

Enter HAMLET *and* HORATIO *afar off*

1 CLOWN. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are ask'd this question next, say 'a grave-maker'; the houses that he makes lasts till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor. [*Exit* 2 CLOWN]

He digs and sings

In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet, 60
To contract, O the time, for-a my behove,
O, methought there was nothing meet.

HAMLET. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

HORATIO. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAMLET. 'T is e'en so. The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1 CLOWN. [*Sings*]

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch, 70

58. [*Exit* . . . Rowe | Ff omit.
61. for-a Camb Delius | for a Q_2 Ff | for, ah Capell Globe Furness.
62. there Ff Globe Delius Furness | there a Q_2 | there-a Camb Globe Furness. — **nothing** Ff | nothing a Q_2 | nothing-a Camb Delius.
70. **claw'd** Pope | clawed Q_2 | caught Ff Rowe Staunton.

57. **Yaughan**. Probably the name of an Elizabethan tavern keeper.

59. A blundering version of a song written by Lord Vaux and printed in *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557.

61. Sometimes printed so as to make 'O' and 'a' ('for-a') represent the Clown's gruntings as he digs.

And hath shipp'd me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.

[*Throws up a skull*]

HAMLET. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to th' ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'erreaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not? 77

HORATIO. It might, my lord.

HAMLET. Or of a courtier, which could say 'Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it, — might it not? 82

HORATIO. Ay, my lord.

HAMLET. Why, e'en so; and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and knock'd about the mazzard with a sexton's spade. Here 's fine revolution, if we had the trick to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on 't.

72. [*Throws*... Capell | Q_2Ff omit. 77. **would** Q_2 | could Ff.
76. **now** o'erreaches | now ore reaches Q_2 | o're Offices F_1. 86. If Ff and Q_2, an Capell Globe Camb Delius.

74-75. In *Cursor Mundi* is a reference to a legend that Cain slew Abel with the jaw-bone of an ass.

76. **politician**: plotter, schemer. "The word is always used in a bad sense by Shakespeare." — Clar. — **o'erreaches**: circumvents. In defence of the Folio reading, it has been pointed out that 'office' as a verb occurs in *Coriolanus*, V. ii. 68, and in *All's Well that Ends Well*, III, ii, 129.

85. **chapless**: jawless. — **mazzard**: head. A form of 'mazer,' 'a bowl.'

88. **loggats**. This was a game somewhat like quoits, in which pear-shaped pieces of wood (small 'logs') are thrown at a mark, the 'jack,' on an ash-strewn floor.

1 CLOWN. [*Sings*]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet; 90
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

[*Throws up another skull*]

HAMLET. There 's another; why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine

92. [*Throws . . .* | Q_2Ff omit.
93. may Q_2 | might Ff.
94. of | of of F_1. — quiddits Ff Delius | quiddities Q_2 Globe Camb.

90. **For and**: and moreover. "The break after 'For' inserted by modern editors is quite wrong." — Dyce. 'And eke' is the equivalent expression in the version of the song given by Percy.

94. The 'of of' of the First Folio may not be a misprint but an indication of hesitancy as Hamlet looks at the skull and ponders. — **quiddits**: quiddities, subtleties, quibbles. The Schoolmen used *quidditas* to describe the real, distinctive nature of a thing. — **quillets**. This may be defined in the same way as 'quiddits' and, as Murray suggests, is probably a form of the same word. The derivation from *quod libet*, or *quid libet*, is ingenious but unlikely.

96. **sconce**: head. In *The Comedy of Errors*, II, ii, 37, it is used punningly in the sense of 'helmet.'

99–100. **statutes . . . recoveries**. Technical legal terms connected with the sale, or transfer, of land. Shakespeare's own purchases of land are worth remembering in this connection.

100–102. These four 'fines' are used punningly in as many different senses; (1) 'end'; (2) 'legal process'; (3) 'elegant'; (4) 'small.'

pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box, and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha? 106

HORATIO. Not a jot more, my lord.

HAMLET. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

HORATIO. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

HAMLET. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1 CLOWN. Mine, sir.

[*Sings*] O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet. 115

HAMLET. I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in 't.

1 CLOWN. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore it is not yours. For my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.

HAMLET. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine. 'T is for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest. 120

1 CLOWN. 'T is a quick lie, sir; 't will away again, from me to you.

110. **which** Q_2 | that Ff.
112. **sirrah** Q_6 | sirra Q_2 | sir Ff.
117. **it is** Ff Globe Delius Furness | tis Q_2 | 'tis Camb.

104. **pair of indentures.** Contracts were usually drawn up in duplicate on the same sheet of parchment, which was cut in two in a toothed, or indented, line, to guard against counterfeits and to prove genuineness in case of controversy.

105. **inheritor**: owner. Cf. 'inherit,' *The Tempest*, IV, i, 154.

111. **assurance in that**: safety in legal parchments. There is a play on the legal sense of 'assurance' in the Elizabethan time, 'conveyance of lands by deed.'

HAMLET. What man dost thou dig it for?

1 CLOWN. For no man, sir.

HAMLET. What woman, then?

1 CLOWN. For none, neither.

HAMLET. Who is to be buried in 't?

1 CLOWN. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she 's dead.

HAMLET. How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1 CLOWN. Of all the days i' th' year, I came to 't that day that our last king Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

HAMLET. How long is that since?

1 CLOWN. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that. It was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAMLET. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

1 CLOWN. Why, because a was mad. A shall recover his wits there; or, if a do not, it 's no great matter there.

HAMLET. Why?

1 CLOWN. 'T will not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

132. **these** Ff Globe | this Q_2 Camb. **courtier** Q_2 | our Courtier Ff.
134. **heel** Q_2 | heeles F_1. — **the** 141. **is** Q_2 | was Ff.

131. **by the card**: with precision. Cf. Osric's expression, V, ii, 109.

133. **picked**: finical, particular. Cf. *Love's Labour 's Lost*, V, i, 14: "He is too picked, too spruce, too affected."

134. **kibe**: chilblain. Cf. *The Tempest*, II, i, 276.

HAMLET. How came he mad?

1 CLOWN. Very strangely, they say.

HAMLET. How 'strangely'?

1 CLOWN. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAMLET. Upon what ground?

1 CLOWN. Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

HAMLET. How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?

1 CLOWN. I' faith, if a be not rotten before a die — as we have many pocky corses now-a-days that will scarce hold the laying in — a will last you some eight year or nine year; a tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET. Why he more than another?

1 CLOWN. Why, sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade that a will keep out water a great while: and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here 's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years.

HAMLET. Whose was it?

1 CLOWN. A whoreson mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

HAMLET. Nay, I know not.

153. sexton Q_4 | Sexten Q_2 | sixteene F_1.

154. **thirty years**. This, in connection with line 140, and line 164 (where the First Quarto has 'this dozen years'), would make Hamlet thirty years of age; but the First Quarto reading, and what is implied in I, ii, 113, make clear that Shakespeare thought of him as much younger. Furnivall comments as follows:

> When Shakespeare began the play he conceived Hamlet as quite a young man; but as the play grew, as greater weight of reflection, of insight into character, of knowledge of life, etc., were wanted, he necessarily and naturally made Hamlet a formed man; and by the time he got to the grave-diggers' scene, told us the Prince was thirty — the right age for him then.

1 Clown. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! A pour'd a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Hamlet. This?

1 Clown. E'en that. 173

Hamlet. Let me see. [*Takes the skull*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chop-fallen? Now, get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come: make her laugh at that! Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing. 185

Horatio. What 's that, my lord?

Hamlet. Dost thou think Alexander look'd o' this fashion i' th' earth?

Horatio. E'en so.

Hamlet. And smelt so? pah! [*Puts down the skull*]

Horatio. E'en so, my lord. 191

Hamlet. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole? 194

170-171. **This . . . sir** | Ff repeat.
174. [*Takes the skull*] Capell (after line 172) | Q_2Ff omit.
177-178. **and now how** Q_2 | And how Ff. — **in my imagination it is** Q_2 | my Imagination is Ff.
181. **Not one** Q_2 | No one Ff.
182. **grinning** Q_2 | leering Ff.
190. **pah** Q_2 | puh Ff. — [*Puts . . .* Collier | Q_2Ff omit.

171. "'Yorick' is perhaps the Danish *Jörg* (George)." — Ainger.

HORATIO. 'T were to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAMLET. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel?

> Imperial Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;
> O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw!

But soft! but soft! Aside! here comes the king,

Enter PRIESTS, *&c., in procession: the corpse of* OPHELIA; LAERTES *and* Mourners *following;* KING, QUEEN, *their trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers. Who is that they follow,
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo it own life. 'T was of some estate.
Couch we awhile, and mark. [*Retiring with* HORATIO]

LAERTES. What ceremony else?

HAMLET. That is Laertes, a very noble youth; mark.

LAERTES. What ceremony else?

1 PRIEST. Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd

202. **Imperial** Ff | Imperious Q_2 Globe Camb Delius Furness.
207. Scene II Pope. — *Enter* . . . Malone (after Capell) | Enter King, Queene, Laertes, and a Coffin, with Lords attendant Ff.
210. it Q_2F_1 Globe | it 's F_3F_4 | its Camb Delius. — **of** Q_2 | Ff omit.

205. **flaw**: gust. "A flaw or gust of wind." — Cotgrave.
210. **Fordo**: destroy. Cf. II, i, 102. — **it**: its. See note, I, ii, 216.

As we have warrantise. Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

LAERTES. Must there no more be done?

1 PRIEST. No more be done.
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

LAERTES. Lay her i' th' earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

216. **warrantise** Dyce Delius | warrantis F_1 | warrantie Q_2F_2 | warranty Globe Camb.
219. **prayers** Q_2 | praier Ff.
221. **crants** Q_2 Globe Delius Camb | Rites Ff Rowe Capell.
226. **sing a** Q_2 | sing sage Ff Rowe Caldecott Knight.

216. **warrantise**: warranty. This form occurs in *Sonnets*, CL.

220. **Shards**: fragments of pottery, potsherds.

221. **crants**: garland, wreaths. The word was originally singular, but came to be treated as plural. It is sometimes found in the form 'craunce' (German *Krantz*). Murray quotes Hardiman, *Our Prayer-Book*, as follows: "The crants were garlands which it was usual to make of white paper, and to hang up in the church on the occasion of a young girl's funeral."

222. **the bringing home**. "In these words reference is still made to the marriage rites which in the case of maidens are sadly parodied in the funeral rites." — Clar. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, IV, v, 84–90.

227. **peace-parted**. The later Folios read 'peace-departed.'

HAMLET. What, the fair Ophelia!
QUEEN. Sweets to the sweet; farewell! [*Scattering flowers*]
I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife:
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.
LAERTES. O, treble woe,
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.
[*Leaps into the grave*]
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.
HAMLET. [*Advancing*] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane! [*Leaps into the grave*]

232. [*Scattering flowers*.] Johnson.
235. have Q_2 | t'haue Ff.—treble woe Q_2 | terrible woer F_1.
243. grief | griefe Q_2 | griefes F_1.
245. Conjures | Coniure F_1.
247. [*Leaps . . .* | Ff omit.

237. **ingenious sense**: keen mind. Cf. *King Lear*, IV. vi, 287.

242–243. In the *Georgics*, I, 281–282, is a description of the attempt made by the Titans to scale the sky and dethrone the Gods by piling Ossa (line 272) on Pelion, "yea and on Ossa to roll Olympus with all its woods."

245. **wand'ring stars**: planets. "They bee also called Wandering Starres, because they never keepe one certaine place or station in the firmament."—Cotgrave.

LAERTES. The devil take thy soul! [*Grappling with him*]
HAMLET. Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wiseness fear. Hold off thy hand!
KING. Pluck them asunder.
QUEEN. Hamlet, Hamlet!
ALL. Gentlemen,—
HORATIO. Good my lord, be quiet.
[*The* Attendants *part them, and they come out of the grave*]
HAMLET. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.
QUEEN. O my son, what theme?
HAMLET. I lov'd Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?
KING. O, he is mad, Laertes.
QUEEN. For love of God, forbear him!
HAMLET. 'Swounds, show me what thou 'lt do:
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?
Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?

248. [*Grappling . . . him*] Rowe.
250. For Q_2 | Sir Ff.
251. something in me Ff Globe Delius | in me something Q_2 Camb.
252. wiseness Ff Globe Delius | wisedom Q_2 | wisdom Camb.
253. ALL. Gentlemen Q_2 | Ff omit.
254. HORATIO | Hora. Q_2 | Gen. Ff. —[*The* Attendants . . . *grave*] Malone.
263. 'Swounds | S'wounds Q_2 | 'Zounds Capell | Come Ff.
264. woo't fast Q_2 | Ff omit.
265. eisel Theobald Globe Camb | Esill Q_2 Delius | Esile (in italics) Ff.

264. **Woo't**: wilt thou. This colloquial form is used either in contempt of Laertes or to express Hamlet's excited utterance.

265. **eisel**. One of the famous *cruces* of the play. Theobald's remark that 'eisel' either represents the name of a river, or is an

I 'll do 't. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I;
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, and thou 'lt mouth,
I 'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN. This is mere madness,
And thus a while the fit will work on him.
Anon, as patient as the female dove
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
His silence will sit drooping.

HAMLET. Hear you, sir;
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I lov'd you ever. But it is no matter;

267. **in** | in to F_4 | into Rowe. | King $F_2F_3F_4$.
272. **and** Q_2Ff | an Pope.
273. QUEEN | Quee. Q_2 | Kin. F_1
276. **couplets** | cuplets Q_2 | cuplet Ff | couplet Delius.

old word meaning 'vinegar,' gives the two most reasonable explanations. The evidence favors the interpretation 'vinegar,' "associated under this name with gall, as the bitter drink offered to Christ." — Herford. Cf. *The Salisbury Primer* (1555) petition: "Blessed Jesu . . . I beseech thee for the bitterness of the aysell and gall that thou tasted." The expression "potions of eisel" occurs in *Sonnets*, CXI, implying the disagreeableness of the drink. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, the reading 'Esill' was adopted, with the suggestion that either the river Yesel (Yssel), or the gulf of Isef, was intended.

268. **quick**: alive. The primary meaning, as in line 120.

273. **mere**: pure, sheer, nothing short of. Lat. *merus*, 'unmixed.'

276. **golden couplets**. The pigeon lays two eggs, and the chicks when hatched are covered with yellow down. — **disclos'd**: hatched. Bacon uses it in this sense. See note, III, i, 166.

Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [*Exit*]

KING. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.
[*Exit* HORATIO]

[*To* LAERTES] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
We 'll put the matter to the present push.
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.
This grave shall have a living monument.
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle*

Enter HAMLET *and* HORATIO

HAMLET. So much for this, sir; now shall you see the other.
You do remember all the circumstance?

HORATIO. Remember it, my lord!

282. **you** Ff Globe Delius | thee Q_2 Camb. — [*Exit* HORATIO] Ff omit.
283. [*To* LAERTES] Rowe | Ff omit. — **your** | you F_1F_2.
SCENE II Rowe | Scene III Pope | Ff omit. — *A hall in the castle* | Capell | Ff omit.
1. **shall you** Q_2 Globe Camb | let me Ff Delius Furness.

283. **in**: in the thought of. See Abbott, § 162.
284. **present push**: instant test. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, I, ii, 281; V, iii, 129; *Macbeth*, V, iii, 20.
286. 'Living' is probably used here "in a double sense; first, that of 'enduring,' as the Queen would understand it; secondly, Laertes would be cognizant of the deeper meaning, by which the life of Hamlet is menaced." — Clar.
1. 'The other' refers to "the words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb" in Hamlet's letter to Horatio, IV, vi.

HAMLET. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,
And prais'd be rashness for it, let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should teach us
There 's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

HORATIO. That is most certain.

HAMLET. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them; had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew

7. **prais'd** | praysd Q_2 | praise Ff. 8. **sometimes** Ff Globe Delius | sometime Q_2 Camb. 9. **deep** Q_2 Globe Camb | deare F_1F_2 | dear F_3F_4 Delius. — **pall** Q_2 | paule F_1 | fall Q_3Q_4 | fail Pope Furness. — **teach** Ff Globe Delius | learn Q_2 Camb.

4–5. Hamlet has from the first divined the king's purpose in sending him to England. Since the close of the interlude, when the king was "frighted with false fire," Hamlet knows that the king did indeed murder his father, and he also knows that the king suspects him of knowing it. Hence, on shipboard, he naturally has a vague, general apprehension of mischief, and this as naturally fills him with nervous curiosity as to the particular shape of danger which he is to encounter.

6. **mutines**: mutineers. See note, III, iv, 83. — **bilboes**: bars of iron with fetters annexed to them by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were linked together. The word was popularly connected with Bilbao (Bilboa) in Spain. To understand the allusion, it should be known that, as these fetters connected the legs of the offenders very closely together, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind "there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep."

9. **pall**: fail. "Strengthes begin to pal." — Phaer, *Æneid*.

12–18. These details are in Belleforest. See Introduction, Sources.

To mine own room again; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio —
O royal knavery! — an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

HORATIO. Is 't possible?

HAMLET. Here 's the commission; read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

HORATIO. I beseech you.

HAMLET. Being thus be-netted round with villainies, —
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play, — I sat me down;
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it fair.
I once did hold it, as our statists do,

20. reasons Q_2 | reason Ff.
27. me F_1 Globe Delius Furness | now Q_2 Camb.
29-30. villainies,—Ere Delius Furness | villaines, Or Q_2 | Villaines, Ere F_1 | villanies, — Ere Globe Dowden | villanies, — Or Camb.

22. **bugs**: terrors, bugbears. Cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, I, ii, 211.
23. **supervise**: perusal. — **bated**: deducted, subtracted.
30–31. Without preliminary thinking, my brains formed a plan.
33–34. **statists**: statesmen. Cf. *Cymbeline*, II, iv, 16. So in Wordsworth's *A Poet's Epitaph:*

> Art thou a Statist in the van
> Of public conflicts trained and bred?

— **A baseness to write fair.** "Most of the great men of Shakespeare's time, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones." — Blackstone.

A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

HORATIO. Ay, good my lord.

HAMLET. An earnest conjuration from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such-like 'as'-es of great charge,
That on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

HORATIO. How was this seal'd?

HAMLET. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,

37. **effect** Q_2 | effects Ff.
40. **like** Q_2 | as Ff. — **might** Q_2 | should Ff.
43. **'as'-es** | Assis Ff | as sir Q_2.
44. **knowing** Q_2 | know Ff.
48. **ordinant** Q_2 | ordinate Ff.

36. "The ancient yeomen were famous for their military valour. 'These were the good archers in times past,' says Sir Thomas Smith, 'and the stable troop of footmen that affraide all France.'" — Steevens. Cf. *Henry V*, III, i, 25; *Richard III*, V, iii, 338.

42. **comma**: link. "A comma is the note of connection and continuity of sentences; the period is the note of abruption and disjunction." — Johnson.

43. **'as'-es**. Hamlet has just used 'as' three times. For another pun on 'as' and 'ass,' see *Twelfth Night*, II, iii, 183–185. — **charge**: weight, importance, moment. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, V, ii, 18–19:

> The letter was not nice but full of charge
> Of dear import,

Which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in form of the other,
Subscrib'd it, gave 't th' impression, plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

HORATIO. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to 't.

HAMLET. Why, man, they did make love to this employment;
They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Doth by their own insinuation grow.
'T is dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell-incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

HORATIO. Why, what a king is this!

HAMLET. Does it not, thinks 't thee, stand me now upon —
He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother,
Popp'd in between th' election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage — is 't not perfect conscience
To quit him with his arm? and is 't not to be damn'd,

51. **form** Globe Delius | forme F1 | the form Camb | the forme Q2.
54. **sequent** Q2 | sement Ff.
58. **defeat** Q2 | debate Ff.
59. **Doth** Ff | Does Q5 Globe Camb Delius | Dooes Q2.

58. **defeat**: destruction. See note, II, ii, 556.

60–62. When men of lower rank come between the thrusts and sword-points of great men engaged in fierce and mortal duel, or bent on fighting it out to the death. — **opposites**: opponents.

63. **thinks 't thee**: seems it to thee. — **stand me now upon**: be incumbent upon me, be my bounden duty.

68–70. **quit**: requite. So below, line 259. — **is 't not . . . evil?** Is it not a damnable sin to let this cancer of humanity proceed further in mischief and villainy?

To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

HORATIO. It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.

HAMLET. It will be short; the interim is mine,
And a man's life 's no more than to say 'One.'
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause I see
The portraiture of his. I 'll court his favours;
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a tow'ring passion.

HORATIO. Peace! who comes here?

Enter young OSRIC

OSRIC. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAMLET. I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

HORATIO. No, my good lord.

78. **court** Rowe | count Ff. 81. Scene IV Pope.

73. Hamlet justly looks forward to the coming of that news as the crisis of his task; it will bring things to a head, and put the king in his power. He can then meet both him and the public with justifying proof of his guilt.

77–78. Hamlet and Laertes have lost each his father, and both have perhaps lost equally in Ophelia; so that their cause of sorrow is much the same.

79. **bravery**: bravado, ostentation. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, V, i, 10.

82–83. **water-fly**. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, V, i, 38. "A water-fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler." — Johnson.

HAMLET. Thy state is the more gracious, for 't is a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile; let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess. 'T is a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

OSRIC. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty. 91

HAMLET. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 't is for the head.

OSRIC. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

HAMLET. No, believe me, 't is very cold; the wind is northerly. 96

OSRIC. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

HAMLET. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

OSRIC. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry — as 't were — I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter, —

HAMLET. I beseech you, remember — 104

[HAMLET *moves him to put on his hat*]

88. **say** | saw F_1.
90. **lordship** Q_5 | Lordshippe Q_2 | friendship Ff.
92. **sir** Q_2 | Ff omit.
94. **it is** Q_2 | 't is Ff.
98-99. **But yet** Q_2 | Ff omit. — **for my complexion.** Globe Delius Ff | or my complection. Q_2 | or my complexion — Camb.
104. [HAMLET ... *hat*] Johnson.

88. **chough.** Either 'chattering jackdaw' is meant, as in *The Tempest*, II, i, 266, or 'chuff,' in the sense of 'boar,' 'churl,' as in *1 Henry IV*, II, ii, 94. As 'chuff' often connoted avarice and miserliness, the reference to 'possession of dirt' is significant. Probably the word is used punningly in both senses. Certainly Osric's euphuistic diction suggests the chattering jackdaw.

104. Remember your courtesy, and be covered.

OSRIC. Nay, in good faith; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes: believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see. 111

HAMLET. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect to his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

OSRIC. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him. 120

105. **in good faith** Ff Delius | good my lord Q_2 Globe Camb. 106-140. **Sir, here . . . unfellow'd** Q_2 | Ff omit (see note).

106–140. The Folios omit this passage with the exception of reading (see line 134) "Sir you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is at his weapon."

107. **excellent differences**: distinctive excellences.

110. **continent**: summary, sum and substance. Cf. IV, iv, 64.

112. Hamlet outdoes Osric's hyperbolical euphuism, and is purposely obscure to bewilder the poor fop. — **definement**: definition, description. According to Murray, the word in this sense does not occur again in English literature until 1867. — **perdition**: loss.

113–115. To discriminate the good parts of Laertes, and make a full catalogue of them, would confuse an arithmetician, and yet would be but a slow and staggering process, compared to his swift sailing. 'Yaw' is a sailor's term, used of a ship that steers wildly or fails to answer her helm.

117–119. The only resemblance to him is his mirror, and nothing but his shadow can keep up with him.

HAMLET. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

OSRIC. Sir?

HORATIO. Is 't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do 't, sir, really.

HAMLET. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSRIC. Of Laertes?

HORATIO. His purse is empty already; all 's golden words are spent.

HAMLET. Of him, sir.

OSRIC. I know you are not ignorant —

HAMLET. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

OSRIC. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is —

HAMLET. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but to know a man well, were to know himself.

OSRIC. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but, in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he 's unfellow'd.

HAMLET. What 's his weapon?

121. The concernancy: how does this concern us? A 'nonce-word.'

124–125. Horatio means to imply that what with Osric's euphuism, and what with Hamlet's catching of Osric's style, they are not speaking in a tongue that can be understood; and he hints that they try another tongue, that is, the common one.

136–137. Hamlet will not claim to appreciate the excellence of Laertes, as this would imply equal excellence in himself, on the principle that a man cannot understand that which exceeds his own measure. He goes into these subtilties on purpose to bewilder Osric.

139–140. imputation: reputation. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, I, iii, 339. — **meed**: merit. Cf. *3 Henry VI*, IV, viii, 38.

OSRIC. Rapier and dagger.

HAMLET. That 's two of his weapons ; but, well.

OSRIC. The king, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses, against the which he has impon'd, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and so. Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

HAMLET. What call you the carriages? 150

HORATIO. I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

OSRIC. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

HAMLET. The phrase would be more germane to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides ; I would it might be hangers till then. But, on : six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages ; that 's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'impon'd,' as you call it? 159

OSRIC. The king, sir, hath laid that in a dozen passes between yourself and him he shall not exceed you three hits ; he hath laid on twelve for nine ; and it would come

144. **king, sir** | sir King F_1. **hath wager'd** Q_2 | ha's wag'd F_1.
145. **has impon'd** | has impaund Q_2 | impon'd Ff.
147. **hanger** Q_2 | hangers Ff. — **and** Q_2 | or Ff.
151-152. Ff omit.
155. **cannon** Ff Globe Delius | a cannon Q_2 Camb.
158. **bet** Q_2 | but Ff.
160. **sir** Q_2 | Ff omit.
162. **laid on** Q_5 | layd on Q_2 | one Ff. — **nine** Q_2 | mine Ff. — **it** Q_2 | that Ff.

145. **impon'd** : staked. Perhaps an Osrican form of 'impawn'd.'

151-152. **must . . . done** : would have to be instructed by a marginal commentary. The allusion is to the way in which old texts were glossed in the margin. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iii, 86–87.

162. **twelve for nine**. What this means exactly is uncertain. As Johnson said, "it is sufficient there was a wager." See note, line 253.

to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAMLET. How if I answer no?

OSRIC. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAMLET. Sir, I will walk here in the hall; if it please his majesty, 't is the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him if I can; if not, I 'll gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

OSRIC. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

HAMLET. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

OSRIC. I commend my duty to your lordship.

HAMLET. Yours, yours. [*Exit* OSRIC] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for 's turn.

HORATIO. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

HAMLET. He did comply with his dug before he suck'd it. Thus has he, and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on, only got the tune of the time

171. if Ff Delius | and Q_2 | an Capell Globe Camb.
177. [*Exit* OSRIC] Capell.
178. **turn** | turne Q_2 | tongue Ff.
182. has Q_2 | had Ff. — **many** Q_2 | mine F_1 | nine $F_2F_3F_4$. — **bevy** Caldecott Delius Furness | breede Q_2 | breed Globe Camb.

169. **breathing time of day**: time for exercise.

179–180. This comparison is found in other Elizabethan writers, and connotes precocity and forwardness. "The lapwing was also a symbol of insincerity, from its habit of alluring intruders from its nest by crying far away from it." — Clar.

181. **comply**: compliment. See note, II, ii, 363. "The very sucking babes hath a kind of adulation towards their nurses for the dugge." — Fulwel, *Arte of Flatterie*, 1579.

and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a LORD

LORD. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall. He sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time. 191

HAMLET. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

LORD. The king and queen and all are coming down.

HAMLET. In happy time. 196

LORD. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

HAMLET. She well instructs me. [*Exit* LORD]

HORATIO. You will lose this wager, my lord. 200

HAMLET. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice. I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all 's here about my heart; but it is no matter.

185-186. **fond and winnowed** Ff | prophane and trennowed Q_2 | fann'd and winnowed Hanmer (Warburton conj.). — **trial** | tryalls F_1F_2.

188-199. *Enter a* LORD. LORD. **My lord . . . instructs me.** [*Exit* LORD] Ff omit.

203. **ill all 's** Q_2 | **all** Ff.

184. **yesty collection**: frothy knowledge and frothy phrases.

185-187. **fond**: foolish. "The metaphor is a mixed one . . . Osric, and others like him, are compared to the chaff which mounts higher than the sifted wheat, and to the bubbles which rise to the surface through the deeper water." — Clar.

HORATIO. Nay, good my lord, — 205

HAMLET. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

HORATIO. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit. 209

HAMLET. Not a whit; we defy augury. There 's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 't is not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all. Since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is 't to leave betimes? Let be.

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, *and other* Attendants *with foils and gauntlets; a table and flagons of wine on it*

KING. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[KING *puts* LAERTES'S *hand into* HAMLET'S]

HAMLET. Give me your pardon, sir: I 've done you wrong;

208. obey it Q_2 | obey Ff.
210. There 's a Ff Globe | there is a Delius | there is Q_2 Camb.
213–214. Since no man . . . Let be Caldecott Camb Delius (Globe omits Let be) | since no man of ought he leaves, knowes what ist to leave betimes, let be Q_2 | since no man ha's ought of what he leaves. What is 't to leave betimes F_1.
215. Scene V Pope.—*Enter* KING . . . *wine on it* | Ff (substantially).
216. [KING . . . *into* HAMLET'S] Dyce | Q_2Ff omit.

206–207. **gain-giving**: misgiving.] Cf. 'gainsay,' 'gainstrive.'

210–211. **augury**: omens. — **There 's . . . sparrow.** Cf. *Matthew*, x, 29.

213–214. "If we possess nothing except our personality, what matters it to leave the adventitious things of life soon or late." — Dowden. Johnson's famous arrangement of the obviously corrupt text of Quartos and Folios is: "Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is 't to leave betimes." Johnson's own interpretation is: "Since no man knows aught of the state of life which he leaves, since he cannot judge what other years may produce, why should he be afraid of leaving life betimes." The textual variants will show that the reading in the text is partly from Quartos and partly from Folios.

But pardon 't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was 't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet!
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he 's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness. If 't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house
And hurt my brother.

LAERTES. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour
I stand aloof, and will no reconcilement
Till by some elder masters of known honour
I have a voice and precedent of peace,

220. sore Ff | a sore Q_2.
230. Omitted in Q_2.
233. mine Ff | my Q_2.
234. brother Q_2 | Mother Ff.

221. exception: disapproval. Cf. *All's Well that Ends Well*, I, ii, 40.

238-239. Till some experts in the code of honor give me the warrant of custom and usage for standing on peaceful terms with you. — Laertes thinks, or pretends to think, that the laws of honor require him to insist on a stern vindication of his manhood. Hamlet

To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time, 240
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

HAMLET. I do embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play.
Give us the foils. Come on.

LAERTES. Come, one for me.

HAMLET. I 'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' th' darkest night, 246
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAERTES. You mock me, sir.

HAMLET. No, by this hand.

KING. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

HAMLET. Very well, my lord; 250
Your grace hath laid the odds o' th' weaker side.

240. **ungor'd** Q_2 | ungorg'd Ff. F_3F_4 Rowe.
242. **I do** Ff | I Q_2.
246. **darkest** Q_2F_1 | brightest F_2
251. **hath** Ff Globe Delius | has Q_2 Camb. — **o' th'** F_4 | a' th' F_1.

has before spoken of Laertes as "a very noble youth." In this part of the scene he has his faculties keenly on the alert against Claudius; but it were a sin in him even to suspect Laertes of anything so unfathomably base as the treachery now on foot.

245–247. Hamlet plays on the word 'foil,' which, from being applied to the gold leaf (Lat. *folium*) used to set off a jewel, comes to mean that which sets off anything and makes it show to advantage, as a dark night sets off a star:

> Fair as a star, when only one
> Is shining in the sky.

251. The 'odds' here referred to is probably the value of the stakes, the king having wagered six Barbary horses against a few rapiers, poniards, etc. Dowden takes 'odds' as the "three points given to Hamlet, who is supposed to be the less skilled."

KING. I do not fear it; I have seen you both;
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.
LAERTES. This is too heavy, let me see another.
HAMLET. This likes me well. These foils have all a length? [*They prepare to play*]
OSRIC. Ay, my good lord.
KING. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
'Now the king drinks to Hamlet!' Come, begin;
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.
HAMLET. Come on, sir.

260. **ordnance** | ordinance F1.
262. **union** Ff | Vnice Q2 | Onyx Q6.
264. Two lines in Ff.
265. trumpet Q2 | trumpets Ff.

253. Here the reference is possibly to the three 'odd' hits in Hamlet's favor, the numbers being nine and twelve, line 162. The king affects to regard this as a fair offset for Laertes's improved skill in the handling of his weapon. But this passage and lines 162, 251 offer a variety of conflicting interpretations. See Furness.

255. **This likes me well.** See note, II, ii, 80.

262. **union**: fine pearl. "Also a faire, greate orient pearle, called an vnion."—Florio, *Italian Dictionary*. A rich gem put into a cup of wine was meant as a gift to the drinker of the wine. Of course the 'union' in this case was the poison.

LAERTES. Come, my lord. [*They play*]
HAMLET. One.
LAERTES. No.
HAMLET. Judgment.
OSRIC. A hit, a very palpable hit.
LAERTES. Well; again.
KING. Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;
Here 's to thy health.
[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within*]
Give him the cup.
HAMLET. I 'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.
Come. [*They play*] Another hit; what say you?
LAERTES. A touch, a touch, I do confess.
KING. Our son shall win.
QUEEN. He 's fat and scant of breath.
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.
HAMLET. Good madam!
KING. Gertrude, do not drink.
QUEEN. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.
KING. [*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.

270. **Come, my lord** Q_2 | Come on sir Ff Rowe Caldecott Staunton.
273. [*Trumpets sound ... off within*] Malone | Trumpets sound and shot goes off F_1 (after **cup**).
274. **set it** Q_2 | set Ff.
278. **Here ... napkin** Q_2 | Heere 's a napkin F_1 | Here 's a napkin $F_2F_3F_4$.
282, 286. [*Aside*] Rowe | Ff omit.

277. There is a tradition that 'fat' was inserted here to suit the physique of Richard Burbage (Burbadge), said to have been the original actor of the part of Hamlet. Probably the word simply means 'out of training.' 'Hot,' 'faint,' 'fey' ('doomed to die') have been suggested as substitutes.

278. **napkin**: handkerchief. Cf. *Othello*, III, iii, 290.

280. **Good madam!** An acknowledgment of the courtesy.

HAMLET. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

QUEEN. Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAERTES. My lord, I'll hit him now.

KING. I do not think't.

LAERTES. [*Aside*] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

HAMLET. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

LAERTES. Say you so? come on. [*They play*]

OSRIC. Nothing, neither way.

LAERTES. Have at you now!

[LAERTES *wounds* HAMLET; *then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and* HAMLET *wounds* LAERTES]

KING. Part them: they are incens'd.

292. [LAERTES . . . Rowe | In scuffling they change Rapiers Ff.

289. To 'make a wanton' of a man, as the phrase is here used, is to 'treat him as a child,' to avoid playing your best with him, or rather to play the game into his hands. — This is a quiet, but very significant stroke of delineation. Laertes is not playing his best, and it is the conscience of what is at the point of his foil that keeps him from doing so; and the effects are perceptible to Hamlet, though he dreams not of the reason.

292. LAERTES *wounds* . . . *wounds* LAERTES. Up to this moment Hamlet has not put forth his strength, he has been merely playing; now, on being unexpectedly wounded, he is instantly stung into fiery action. — The exchanging of foils took place well in Edwin Booth's ordering of the matter on the stage. There Hamlet, in a rapture of energy and adroitness, struck the foil out of Laertes's hand, picked it up, and threw down his own, which, again, was presently picked up by Laertes. In Salvini's arrangement, only Laertes dropped his foil; Hamlet put his foot upon it, and offered Laertes his own.

HAMLET. Nay, come, again. [QUEEN *falls*]
OSRIC. Look to the queen there, ho!
HORATIO. They bleed on both sides. How is 't, my lord?
OSRIC. How is 't, Laertes?
LAERTES. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.
HAMLET. How does the queen?
KING. She swounds to see them bleed.
QUEEN. No, no, the drink, the drink — O my dear Hamlet —
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [*Dies*]
HAMLET. O villainy! Ho! let the door be lock'd!
Treachery! seek it out. [LAERTES *falls*]
LAERTES. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life:
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother 's poison'd!
I can no more. The king, the king 's to blame.
HAMLET. The point envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work! [*Stabs* KING]

293. [QUEEN *falls*] Capell.
296. **mine own** Q_2 | mine F_1 | my $F_2F_3F_4$ Rowe | my own Pope.
298. **swounds** F_3F_4 Globe Camb | sounds $Q_2F_1F_2$ | swoonds Delius.
300. [*Dies*] Q_2Ff omit.
302. [LAERTES *falls*] Capell.
312. [*Stabs* KING] Hurts the King Ff | Q_2 omits.

296. The woodcock was often used as a decoy. Cf. I, iii, 115.
307. **Unbated**: unblunted. Cf. IV, vii, 137. — **practice**: plot.
312. **to thy work**. Theobald read 'do thy work.'

All. Treason ! treason !

KING. O, yet defend me, friends ! I am but hurt.

HAMLET. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion ! Is thy union here?
Follow my mother ! [KING *dies*]

LAERTES. He is justly serv'd ;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet ;
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me ! [*Dies*]

HAMLET. Heaven make thee free of it ! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu !
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time — as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest — O, I could tell you —
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead ;
Thou liv'st : report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO. Never believe it ;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane :
Here 's yet some liquor left.

318. **temper'd** | temp'red Ff. Q2 | causes right Ff.
329. **cause aright** Q4|cause a right 331. **antique** anticke Q2 | antike F1.

318. **temper'd**: mixed. Cf. *Love's Labour 's Lost*, IV, iii, 347.

326. **fell sergeant, death**. So in Sylvester, *Translation of DuBartas*: "And Death, drad Serjant of th' eternall Iudge."

331. **an antique Roman**. Brutus, Cassius, and Antony, in Shakespeare's great Roman plays, commit suicide. In *Julius Cæsar*, V, iii, 89, Titinius, as he kills himself, says, "This is a Roman's part." Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, V, i, 101–103; *Macbeth*, V, viii, 1.

HAMLET. As thou 'rt a man,
Give me the cup. Let go; by heaven, I 'll have 't.
O good Horatio! what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. [*March afar off, and shot within*]
What warlike noise is this?

OSRIC. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To th' ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAMLET. O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England;
But I do prophesy th' election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited — the rest is silence. [*Dies*]

HORATIO. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest! [*March within*]
Why does the drum come hither?

334. **good** Ff | god Q_2 | God Q_4 | God! Capell Furness.
339. [*March . . . shot within*] Steevens | March . . . shout within Ff.
340. Scene VI Pope. — Enter Osricke Q_2Ff.
348. silence | silence. O, o, o, o F_1.
349. **cracks** | cracke F_1.

343. **o'er-crows.** "As a victorious cock crows over his defeated antagonist." — Jennens. The word is borrowed from the cockpit.
347. **occurrents**: events. — **more and less**: greater and smaller.
348. **solicited**: prompted (my action). Cf. *Richard II*, I, ii, 2.

Enter FORTINBRAS, *and the* English AMBASSADORS, *with drums, colours, and* Attendants

FORTINBRAS. Where is this sight?
HORATIO. What is it ye would see?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.
FORTINBRAS. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?
1 AMBASSADOR. The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late.
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks?
HORATIO. Not from his mouth,
Had it th'ability of life to thank you.
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arriv'd, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;

352. **this** $Q_2F_1F_2$ | the F_3F_4. — **ye** Ff Globe Delius | you Q_2 Camb. 354. **This** Q_2 | His Ff. 356. **shot** Q_2 | shoote F_1.

354. **quarry**: heap of slain. Cf. *Macbeth*, IV, iii, 206. — **cries on**: exclaims against. — **havoc**: indiscriminate slaughter. As 'havoc' was often a word of signal calling for no quarter in battle (cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III, i, 273), some interpret this passage, This pile of corpses urges to ruthless slaughter.

355. **toward**: in preparation. — **eternal**. See note, I, v, 21.

362. **his mouth**: the king's mouth.

365. **jump upon**: immediately following. Cf. I, i, 65.

And let me speak to th' yet unknowing world
How these things came about. So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause;
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.

FORTINBRAS. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim, my vantage doth invite me.

HORATIO. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more;
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.

FORTINBRAS. Let four captains

373. forc'd Ff | for no Q_2.
379. rights Q_2 | Rites Ff.
380. now Q_2 | are Ff.
381. also Q_2 | alwayes Ff.

373. **put on**: instigated. In line 387, 'put to the proof.' A third meaning is in I, iii, 94. — **forc'd**: not properly justified.

374. In archery, the 'upshot' was the final, the deciding, shot.

379. **of memory**: which are (or 'must be') remembered.

382. **draw on more**: "be seconded by others." — Theobald. The reference is to Hamlet's dying words, lines 345–346.

385–393. Compare the closing speeches in *Julius Cæsar* and *King Lear* with these words of Fortinbras. These great tragedies do not end melodramatically with the curtain rung down immediately on the death of the protagonist. As in *The Ancient Mariner*, after the stress and tension of the catastrophe, relief comes in the things of the day's business. While this condition may result to a certain

Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally; and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off*]

391. **bodies** Q_2 | body Ff Rowe Knight Collier Grant White. | Exeunt Q_2 Exeunt Marching: after the which, a Peale of Ordenance are shot off F_1.
393. [*A dead . . . shot off*] Capell

extent from Elizabethan stage exigencies, it is true to life and to that highest art which interprets life.

388. **passage**: departure, death. As in III. iii. 86. Cf. 'passing-bell.'

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Arthur Schultz

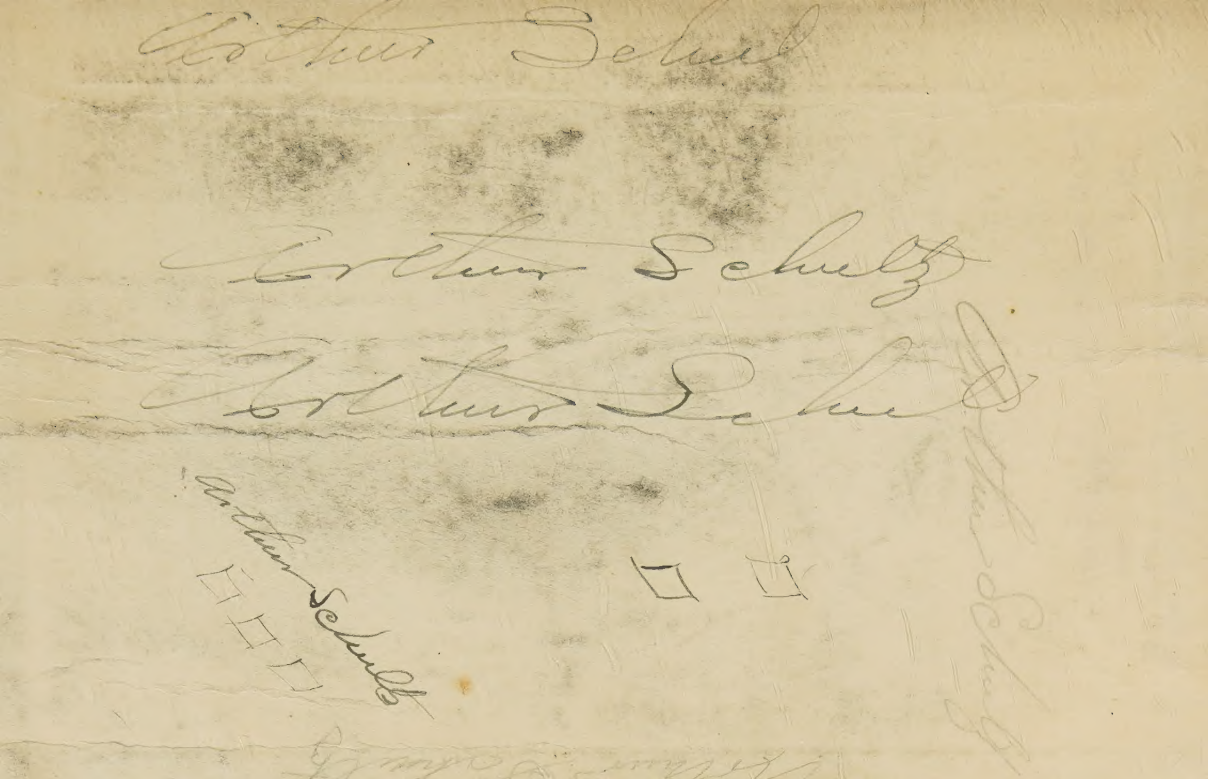
Arthur Zeh

Arthur Schultz

Schultz

Hamlet's father is borrowed
[illegible] Feng or Fengon
[illegible] mother Gunther or Gerund

Arthur Schultz.

lay home to him
broad,
much heat,
sconce,
round,
warrant
idle
~~[illegible]~~ rood
rat,
ducat
better
brassed,
~~[illegible]~~
rose
blister
Dieu's oath
compraction
rapsidy
glow

solidity
Compound
tristful
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hyperon
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mildew dear
batten
moor
thralled
quaintly
coucened
mope,
mutine
punders
grain spots
lithe
precedent.